



RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN JAIN DIASPORA: An Ethnographic Study of the Leicester Jain Community

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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis presented for the degree of PhD in Religious Studies has

- i) been composed entirely by myself,
- ii) been solely the result of my own work,
- iii) not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Edinburgh, 5th October 2018

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Lay Summary

How does religion change after migration? Do elements of its practice show signs of change or continuity depending on where its practitioners migrate to? This thesis explores the questions connected to religious change in diaspora by focusing on the community of Jains living in Leicester and building on their voices to paint a picture of how Jainism is practiced in England in mid-2010s. First I introduce the religious tradition in question, the Leicester Jain community, and my doctoral research project (*Chapter 1: Introduction*), before I explore the scholarship on diaspora and how religion is practiced in diasporic communities in order to situate the Leicester Jains in wider academic discussions (*Chapter 2: Leicester Jains as Diaspora*). After the introductory discussion, I examine religious change in the Leicester Jain community by first looking at the impact of migration history on their present-day religious practice and argue that three distinct generations emerged out of the complex migratory path threaded (*Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*). As a consequence of the generational split two distinct styles of religious practice also emerged – the youth practice a more individual, introspective, and doctrinal form of Jainism, while the older generation typically employs a more ritual-based, communal, and traditional style of practice. I discuss this difference through the lens of ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ Jainism and examine some of its linguistic, geographical, and educational aspects (*Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*). Then I focus on the everyday (im)practicalities uniting all Leicester Jains by looking at the Leicester Jain Centre and the adoption of various food avoidances by individuals to signal hierarchies and status within the community (*Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*). Next we are transported to the Indian city of Jamnagar (Gujarat), where Jainism has been practiced for centuries, and I analyse the role of temples, Jain ascetics, and the wider social environment in the practice of Jainism in Jamnagar, while contrasting it with examples of religious change in Leicester (*Chapter 6: Echoes from India*). In order to draw together the individual strands of religious change I then examine a variety of potential influences on the practice of Jainism in Leicester that are engendering religious change and propose a model of societal influence on religious practice (*Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*). I conclude with a short reflection on the difficulties of studying change and the various contributions this thesis has made to academic scholarship (*Chapter 8: Conclusion*).

Thesis Abstract

This thesis is guided by a seemingly simple question: *How does the practice and interpretation of religion change as a consequence of migration and life in diaspora?* It aims to answer this question by focusing on the community of Jains living in Leicester (England, UK) and utilising a two-sited ethnographic methodology (comparing the Leicester community with the Jains living in Jamnagar [Gujarat, India]) to provide an in-depth examination of religious change in the diasporic community. After an introduction to the religious tradition of Jainism, the Leicester Jain community, and the research design of my doctoral project (*Chapter 1: Introduction*), I situate the study within the broader academic discussion by exploring how different definitions of ‘diaspora’ and theories of religion in diaspora fit the case study of Leicester Jains (*Chapter 2: Leicester Jains as Diaspora*), before delving into the ethnographic data at the core of the thesis. First I examine the influence of the community’s migration history on their present-day religious practice and trace the influences of ascetic absence, loosened structures of religious transmission, and lower religious saturation of their environments on the formation of three distinct generations within the community (*Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*). Stemming from the generational division within the Leicester Jain community arose two distinct styles of religious practice: the youth practice a more individual, introspective, and doctrinal form of Jainism, while the older generation typically employs a more ritual-based, communal, and traditional style of practice. I explore this bifurcation through the dichotomy of ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ and shine a light on the linguistic, geographical, and educational aspects of the youth’s Jain practice (*Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*). My next focus on everyday (im)practicalities of living in diaspora brings the whole community together again in an examination of the Leicester Jain Centre and how its worship space and its use signal intra-community hierarchies, and how individuals’ status within the community can be communicated through the avoidance of particular doctrinally proscribed food items (*Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*). Then we are transported to the non-diasporic city of Jamnagar, where I examine the role of Jain worship spaces, the impact of the Jain ascetics’ presence, and the influence of the wider social context on the Jamnagar Jain groups, while remaining in conversation with the Leicester field site (*Chapter 6: Echoes from India*). Before concluding the thesis by offering a short reflection of the difficulties of studying change (*Chapter 8: Conclusion*), I draw together the data presented in the thesis, examine internal and external influences engendering religious change in the Leicester Jain community, and construct a model of societal influence on religious practice (*Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

When someone moves to a different country, a different continent, what happens to their religious practice? How does their new environment influence the way they interpret and practice their religious tradition? Does religious change manifest itself on the level of a group or are we limited to talking about changes in religiosity of individuals? What role do figures of authority play in the changing expression of religion outside its traditional lands? Does age matter? Does the history of previous generations matter? How do we disentangle change from continuity? How does the study of one community help us understand other communities? What does a case study contribute to the wider discussion? And why study religion outside its traditional lands in the first place?

These are some of the questions that guide the thesis in your hands. They have occupied my thoughts at various points of the research process and find answers in different parts of the text that is the culmination of a four-year-long inquiry into the Jain community living in Leicester, England. I came to the topic of religious change in Jain diaspora following a windy path and almost by accident – it could be said that without borrowing an overlooked book in the University of Edinburgh’s Main Library I would probably have never gone to Leicester. The book was *Organizing Jainism in India and England* by Marcus Banks (1992) and I picked it up while deciding on a topic for my Master’s dissertation. I was all out of ideas and a combination of a previously written essay on women in Jainism, a discarded preliminary bibliography for an essay comparing the Buddha’s and Mahāvīra’s views on women, and Banks’s book put me on a path to researching the marital and familial lives of Jain women living in Leicester. I spent a summer exploring the world of Leicester Jainism and the fusion of Jainism’s under-representation in scholarship on South Asia and the wealth of data I was able to glean from my relatively short stay put me solidly on the path of wanting to research the Leicester Jain community in further depth.

The precise nature of this inquiry, though, came from a tangible disparity between the literature on contemporary Jainism based in India and the practice of Jainism I observed in Leicester. While the scholarship on Jainism as a lived religion in India was limited to begin with, many of the things described simply did not apply to the Leicester community. Trying to see the connections described in Whitney Kelting's remarkable book on Jain wifehood, *Heroic Wives* (2009a), in the lives of Leicester Jain women proved to be challenging enough to warrant asking questions about the book's utility in researching Jain communities outside of India. On my excruciatingly long bus journey back from Leicester after my Master's fieldwork I began considering the struggles I had had with trying to fit the Leicester Jain community into the scholarly mould that was cast for them in India, and the limits of scholarship focused too much on the traditional place of a religious tradition – India in the case of Jainism. I recalled all the things that did not fit my expectations formed by reading ethnographies conducted in India; compared to these scholarly representations, there were many things that were either absent or have found different expressions in Leicester Jainism. By the time I stretched my stiff knees and stepped off the bus in Edinburgh I had an idea brewing in my mind that found its form in the research project presented in this thesis.

The project was guided by a simple question: How does the interpretation and practice of religion change as a consequence of migration and life in diaspora? Taking the Leicester Jain community as a case study I endeavoured to explore what elements of Jainism have changed in Leicester by constructing a research design based on two field sites and qualitative intergenerational analysis. I spent a year conducting fieldwork in Leicester, England (UK), and Jamnagar, Gujarat (India), and amassed over sixty hours of interviews with Jains from eighteen to eighty years old.

The thesis that grew out of my exploration gives a snapshot of religious change in the Leicester Jain community and approaches the complexities of Leicester Jainism by looking at a select number of examples. After the introductory discussion of *Chapters 1* and *2*, I first examine the impact of the community's migration history on their present-day religious practice by tracing the influences of ascetic absence, loosened structures of religious transmission, and lower religious saturation of social environments on Leicester Jains. I argue that three distinct generations emerged out

of the complex migratory paths threaded by Leicester Jains (and their ancestors), which further resulted in the emergence of two distinct styles of religious practice. The youth practiced a more individual, introspective, and doctrinal form of Jainism, while the older generation typically employed a more ritual-based, communal, and traditional style of practice. I discuss their difference through the lens of ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ Jainism, and examine this example of intergenerational innovation in light of Heelas and Woodhead’s theory of the ‘subjective turn’ (2005), before also exploring its linguistic, educational, and geographic aspects.

After looking at generational divisions and differences in religious practice, my next focus on everyday (im)practicalities of living in diaspora brings the whole community together again in an examination of space and food. I explore the Leicester Jain Centre and how the spatial distribution and customary use of its worship spaces signals intra-community sub-group hierarchies, and examine how the adoption of dietary avoidances of particular doctrinally proscribed food items communicates individuals’ status within the wider Leicester Jain community. To tease out the influence of a diasporic environment on religious practice we are then transported to the Indian city of Jamnagar, where Jainism has been practiced for centuries and has an established place in the local religious landscape. Continuously contrasting the diasporic and non-diasporic contexts, I analyse the role temples, Jain ascetics, and the wider social environment play in the practice of Jainism in Jamnagar and Leicester. In order to draw together the individual strands of religious change explored throughout the thesis, I lastly examine a variety of internal and external factors engendering religious change in Leicester Jainism and conclude by proposing a model of societal influence on religious practice that can be applied to case studies beyond the Leicester Jain community.

By exploring religious change among Leicester Jains this thesis aims to fill the gap in scholarship on Jainism as a lived religion. As such it not only contributes to the field of Jain Studies by examining a community of Jains living outside of India, but also to the fields of Religious Studies and Diaspora Studies. By looking at an example of ‘religiosity’ and ‘spirituality’ outside the ‘holistic’ milieu and within a single community the thesis contributes a thought-provoking case study to the discussion of contemporary British religiosity. And by analysing internal and

external influences on religious change in a diasporic environment, as well as by constructing a model of societal influences on religious practice, the thesis adds to our understanding of religion in diaspora. Overall, the thesis strives to speak to topics beyond the confines of its case study – the influence of migrational history on subsequent generations, the religious innovation of younger practitioners, the negotiation of everyday realities, and the influence of social environments on religious practice.

Before we can start exploring the ethnographical data acquired in Leicester (and Jamnagar) or even situating the case study in broader scholarship on religion in diaspora, we first need to look at two things that form the very base on which my analysis is built – the fundamentals of Jainism as a religion, and a short introduction of the Leicester Jains and their community.

Jainism in Brief

There are a handful of introductory texts to Jainism – some that have withstood the test of time (like Paul Dundas's *The Jains* [2002] and Padmanabh S. Jaini's *The Jaina Path of Purification* [1994]) and some newer ones that aim to approach Jainism as a contemporary tradition and introduce it to new students (like Jeffrey D. Long's *Jainism: An Introduction* [2009], Lawrence A. Babb's *Understanding Jainism* [2013], and Sherry Fohr's *Jainism: A Guide for the Perplexed* [2015]). Yet in both older and newer books there is an explicit emphasis on the history, doctrine, and influential texts of Jainism, while rituals and daily practices of Jains are typically relegated to the back of the book, described in technical details, and often focused on ascetics.

For an anthropologist going into the field, unfamiliarity with Jain daily practice (especially that of the laity) is a major hindrance (though usually corrected by a steep learning curve after arrival) and for the reader of this thesis an introduction to Jainism as a lived religion is vital for a better understanding of the content presented. This short introduction to Jainism will therefore break the stylistic conventions of similar introductory texts and instead approach the Jain tradition through the central practices of the laity and the variety of their daily expressions of religiosity.

Yet while the below approach of interweaving practices, doctrines, and history of Jainism in its explanation reflects the complexity and messiness of lived Jainism, it might not lend itself well to readers unfamiliar with the broader contours of this South Asian religious tradition. Thus, I want to first quickly introduce the broader parameters of Jainism before delving into its specifics.

Growing out of the same cultural milieu as Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism believes in rebirth and the inherent undesirability of rebirth, *karma* as a way of keeping an individual in the world of rebirth, and the possibility of liberation from the suffering caused by continuous rebirth. The path towards liberation preached by a string of twenty-four enlightened teachers (*tīrthaṅkaras*) is primarily characterised by non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), detachment from the material world, and ascetic practices aimed at minimising the amount of *karma* an individual soul (*jīva*) has accumulated. Once all the accumulated *karma* is shed, a soul becomes liberated, ascending to the top of the universe, never to be reborn again. While the Jains believe in the existence of gods and goddesses, who can interact with the human world, the liberated beings are qualitatively different from them; without attachments they are completely detached from the world and do not interact with it. They are the examples emulated by Jains, as the gods and goddesses are still caught in the cycle of rebirth and thus trapped within the world of suffering. These doctrinal complexities are expressed in the lives of everyday Jains primarily through the adoption of practices that minimise the amount of harm caused to living beings and a variety of ritual activities – some of which are explored below.

The Namaskāra Mantra

The majority of Jains one encounters point to a short sequence of words called the *namaskāra mantra* (roughly the *mantra* of salutations, also called *navkar mantra*) as one of the most fundamental parts of Jainism – both in expressing its beliefs as well as an element of their daily practice. The ancient *mantra* summarises homage to five categories of living beings, which are worthy of worship in the Jain tradition (see Jaini 1998, 162-4; Wiley 2014, 153).



Namo arihaṃtāṇaṃ

Namo siddhāṇaṃ

Namo āyariyāṇaṃ

Namo uvajjhāyāṇaṃ

Namo loe savvasāhūṇaṃ

Eso paṃca ṇamokkāro

Savva-pāva ppaṇāsaṇo

Maṅgalāṇaṃ ca savvesiṃ

Paḍhamañ havai maṅgalaṃ

I bow to the enlightened ones [*arhat*],

I bow to the liberated ones [*siddha*],

I bow to the ascetic leaders [*ācārya*],

I bow to the religious teachers [*upādhyāya*],

I bow to all the ascetics [*sādhu*].

This five-fold salutation,

Which destroys all sin,

Is the pre-eminent as the most auspicious of
all auspicious things.¹

Image 1: *Namaskāra mantra*²

The first two categories of living beings mentioned in this *mantra* of five salutations are those who have achieved liberation, while the last three categories describe those committed to striving towards it. In addition to *arihaṃta* and *siddha*, Jainism has two other words to describe liberated souls³ – *jina* (meaning spiritual victor and giving the Jains their name as those following the *jinās*) and *tīrthaṅkara*. *Tīrthaṅkara* usually translates as ‘ford-maker’ (using the metaphor of a ford in the river to convey how their preaching creates a passage for Jains to reach liberation

¹ Translation adapted from Jaini (1998, 162-4). The first five lines of the *namaskāra mantra* are shared by all the branches of Jainism, while the last four are rejected by Digambara Jains and only recited in Śvetāmbara practice. Jain sectarianism will be examined below.

² Image by Kapasi Handicrafts. Accessed 30th September. <https://glowroad.com/kapasi-handicrafts-wooden-inlay-work-navkar-maha-mantra-frame-37-cm-x-41-cm-x-3-cm-brown-and-white/az/B01DSYFL8A>

³ All liberated beings are detached from the rest of the Jain universe and cannot interact with it (e.g., granting requests of intervening in events).

from rebirth) and refers to those who achieved omniscience and preached the Jain doctrine before passing away and reaching *mokṣa*, or liberation.

Jainism postulates a cyclical time and in every half cycle a new set of twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* appears that revives and re-establishes the Jain tradition. The last of the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* of our half-cycle was Mahāvīra, who lived in the 6th or 5th century BCE.⁴ According to tradition born as a prince, Mahāvīra later renounced worldly comforts and possessions, and became a *sādhu*, a virtuous man, an ascetic. After twelve years of performing austerities he achieved omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) and preached the timeless doctrine of Jainism (for more see Dundas 2002, 12-44, Jaini 1998, 1-38).

The *namaskāra mantra* encapsulates the Jain reverence of the ideal of liberation and all the beings engaged in the pursuit of that ideal (it is noteworthy in not venerating any particular individuals, not even Mahāvīra or the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras*). The words of the *namaskāra mantra* are instilled in children from a young age and can be recited on their own with the help of a *mālā* (a string of prayer beads), or as part of other ritual sequences (e.g., *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa*). They can also be said as part of a morning domestic practice while staring at one's cupped hands – the line between one's palm and fingers represents the *siddha-śilā*, the abode of the liberated beings, and the twenty-four phalanges of both hands, the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras*. And the *namaskāra mantra* is also a constant musical companion to one's life, as sung *namaskāra mantra* is often played on repeat in households or cars, or might be revered as an image (like the one above) in one's home.

Sāmāyika and Pratikramaṇa

In addition to the *namaskāra mantra*, two other rituals are common to all Jains (though they vary in their recitations and ritual gesticulation) – *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa*. *Sāmāyika* is a forty-eight-minute ritual framework that is devoted to the study of religious texts, singing of devotional songs, or some other engagement with Jain doctrine. It is bookended by the temporary adoption of ascetic vows that

⁴ While Jain sources put Mahāvīra's life between 599 and 527 BCE (or 510 BCE, depending on the branch of Jainism), scholars base their calculations on the life of the Buddha, positioning Mahāvīra's life between 500 and 425 BCE (Dundas 2002, 24).

prevent one from touching people of the opposite gender or using electronic devices (see Jaini 2010e). *Pratikramaṇa* is a ritual that utilises the temporary ascetic vows of *sāmāyika* as framing devices, yet does not allow for much variation within them. While Jains are free to choose from a variety of religious activities during *sāmāyika*, *pratikramaṇa* is a repentance ritual devoted to asking forgiveness from all those one might have hurt, knowingly or unknowingly (see Wiley 2014, 170).

The driving force behind the *pratikramaṇa* is also the most well known feature of Jainism: its insistence on non-violence. Not only do the Jains abstain from violent physical acts, they also implement the principle of *ahiṃsā* (non-harm, non-violence) into their lives through non-violent speech, non-violent thoughts, following a strict vegetarian diet,⁵ and even taking care not to accidentally step on any organisms while walking (see Jaini 2010a; Babb 2015, 56-58; Sangave 2001, 144-170). *Ahiṃsā* is one of the doctrines that are often called ‘the three As of Jainism,’ the other two being *aparigraha* and *anekāntavāda*. *Aparigraha*, or non-possession (also asceticism), is often interpreted as a two-pronged practice, which includes both the minimisation of the number of individual possessions, as well as the minimisation of one’s attachment to possessions and the material things in life. Lay Jains would sometimes take vows to only keep a certain amount of items in a particular category (e.g., shirts), while the ascetics renounce most of their possessions and only keep a handful of necessary items (see Laidlaw 1995). The last of ‘the three As’ is *anekāntavāda*, a concept most frequently translated as many-pointedness, non-dogmatism, or non-one-sidedness. While this doctrine does not play a major part in lay Jains’ everyday lives, it is often invoked in multi-faith contexts as an acceptance of other religious positions (see Jaini 1998, 90-97, N. L. Jain 2008).

Ahiṃsā and *aparigraha* are both represented in the rituals of *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa* – not only does a practitioner focus on the idea of non-violence and repentance during the rituals, but the paraphernalia required symbolises the two ideals as well. Both *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa* are typically performed sitting cross-legged on the floor reciting lines of verse and a Jain would use only a handful of items for them – a woollen mat (or *pāṭhuraṇuṇ*) to sit on, a small whisk-broom (*rajoharaṇa*) used to symbolically whisk away any creatures from the floor and

⁵ We will examine Jain food practices in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*.

one's body, and a handkerchief to cover one's mouth (called *muhpattī*), thus continuously taking care to minimise harm caused. While *sāmāyika* can be performed at individuals' convenience, *pratikramaṇa* is most often performed during *Paryuṣaṇa* (the most important Jain celebration, examined below), when one seeks forgiveness for the harm done during the past year, though pious laypeople and ascetics perform *pratikramaṇa* twice daily – once in the morning to atone for the harm done during the night, and once in the evening for the harm done during the day.

Darśana, Āratī, and Pūjā

While *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa* are the main rituals for image-rejecting worship of Sthānakvāsīs, the image-worshipping Derāvāsīs have a much wider arsenal of ritual worship, since they believe that worship of *mūrtis* (icons, statues) or other consecrated images of *tīrthaṅkaras* is spiritually beneficial (see Cort 2010, Babb 1996). In the 17th century a major sectarian split occurred within the Śvetāmbara branch of Jainism,⁶ resulting in the branch of Sthānakvāsī Jainism, which rejects image worship and instead focuses their worship around the sacred Jain texts (or *āgamas*) (see Dundas 2002, 246-254). They have also reformed certain parts of lay practice (e.g., allowing both men and women to recite the ritual verses of *sāmāyika* and *pratikramaṇa*) and monastic code (e.g., ascetics must permanently cover their mouths with a white piece of cloth, a *muhpattī*).

The image-worshipping, or *mūrtipūjaka*, branch of Jainism is mostly known by its colloquial term Derāvāsī, meaning 'derāsar-dwelling' – *derāsar* being the name of image-centred Jain temples. Similarly, Sthānakvāsī means 'sthānaka-dwelling,' where *sthānaka* is a name used to describe the ascetic shelters in which lay Sthānakvāsīs also congregate. Derāvāsī *derāsars* are typically centred around a statue of one of the *tīrthaṅkaras* (depictions of *tīrthaṅkaras* are very similar, differentiated only by the symbol at the base of their image [see Cort 2010]), which are also the centres of ritual activity.

⁶ We will look at the other major branch of Jainism, Digambara, shortly.

We will briefly look at three rituals in particular – *darśana*, *āratī*, and *pūjā*. *Darśana* is the reverential viewing of images of *tīrthaṅkaras* and other liberated or non-liberated beings (e.g., gods/goddesses, *gurus*, ascetics) that is the basic ritual practice involving a *mūrti*. *Āratī* is a ritual offering of a five-wicked lamp containing *ghee* (clarified butter) and is typically performed in pair with *maṅgaḷa dīvo* (an offering of a single-wicked *ghee* lamp containing camphor). They are performed in pair, usually at the end of a particular sequence of worship or at the end of a day of worship at a temple.

And lastly, *pūjā*, a word that in its broadest sense means simply ‘worship.’ There are a number of different *pūjās* a Derāvāsī Jain can perform (see Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994): the most fundamental and most widely practiced *pūjā* is *dravya pūjā* (external or material worship, most often referred to as simply ‘*pūjā*’) a tactile ritual, in which a ritually clean individual (i.e., freshly bathed and wearing clothes in which they have not eaten, drunk, or excreted) touches points of a *tīrthaṅkara mūrti* with sandalwood paste and performs a sequence of actions before and after touching the *mūrti*. Circling *ghee* lights, dancing with an ornamental whisk-broom, arranging grains of rice into the symbols of rebirth and liberation, and bowing or prostrating in front of the *mūrtis* are some of the actions performed by a Jain doing *dravya pūjā*.



Image 2: Actions of a *pūjā* (images by the author)

Yet there are forms of communal *pūjā* in Derāvāsī Jainism as well, one of which is *snātra pūjā* – a ritual re-enactment of the first bath of an infant *tīrthaṅkara* conducted by gods at Mount Meru immediately after their birth. A smaller statue of a *tīrthaṅkara* is positioned on top of a wooden structure, where it is bathed in milk and water, offered flowers, rice, and other substances, and in front of which ritual verses are sung.⁷ On the low table in front of the *pūjā* structure one often finds rice patterns that are also constructed during the performance of *dravya pūjā* (pictured above) – the *svastika* (representing rebirth), the three jewels of Jainism (right view/faith, right knowledge, and right conduct), and a representation of the abode of liberation (*siddha-śilā*).

⁷ Besides Derāvāsīs, Digambaras also perform *pūjā* to *mūrtis*, though they do not touch them. Only men are allowed to pour milk and water on the image, while everyone symbolically offers the *mūrtis* substances such as dried coconut and rice by placing them on small metal plates in front of the images.

The *svastika*, a positive and widespread symbol in Jainism, represents the four embodiments a soul can be born into – human, animal, heavenly, and hellish (see Jaini 2010c). As for Hindus and Buddhists, the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) is seen as a source of suffering and an undesirable state of existence for the Jains as well. Instead, they aspire to shed the *karma*, which keeps them in *saṃsāra*, and achieve liberation from rebirth (*mokṣa*), characterised by non-attachment, infinite bliss, and infinite knowledge and perception. The path to *mokṣa* is summarised by the three jewels or gems of Jainism (*ratnatraya*), which are represented as three dots above the *svastika* (see Dundas 2002, 87; Jaini 1998, 141-156). Through the implementation of right view/faith, knowledge, and conduct (and their many implications) a Jain aspires to transcend rebirth and achieve *mokṣa*.

When a soul achieves liberation, it floats to the top of the Jain universe, no longer weighed down by *karma* and destined for infinite bliss for all eternity. Often represented by a man with arms and legs akimbo, the Jain universe consists of seven layers of hell populated by various demons and other hellish creatures; sixteen different heavens, where gods, goddesses, and heavenly beings reside; a topmost crescent-shaped area called the *siddha-śillā*, where liberated souls float blissfully over the universe; and a mid-section between heaven and hell (*madhya-lokka*), where humans and animals live (see Bossche 2007). Although the position of a soul within the universe is determined by the *karmas* it had previously accumulated (see Jaini 2010b), it is only from the human form that a soul can achieve *mokṣa* (see Dundas 2002, 104-105). Since it experiences both enjoyment and suffering, it is able to realise the inherent suffering of rebirth, and able to practice the austerities necessary to shed the accumulated karma.⁸

Jain Ascetics, Temples, and Festivals

Another important element of Jain practice is visiting ascetics, those most actively working towards shedding their *karmas* and achieving liberation. The Jain community is divided into four parts: male ascetics, female ascetics, male

⁸ Jain doctrine is adamant about the fact that gods and goddesses – although possessing many extraordinary powers and incredibly long lifespans – are nevertheless part of *saṃsara* and destined to be reborn again.

householders (or laity), and female householders (or laity). While this four-fold community was established as a unified entity at the time of Mahāvīra, at the start of the Common Era (CE) a major division between ‘sky-clad’ Digambaras and ‘white-clad’ Śvetāmbaras⁹ appeared and became solidified by the fourth century CE. While the two branches of Jainism disagree on several doctrinal matters (see Dundas 2002, 45-59), the most recognisable difference is in the appearance of their ascetics – while the Śvetāmbara ascetics are robed in pieces of white unstitched fabric draped around their body, the Digambara (or ‘sky-clad’) ascetic go without clothing altogether.¹⁰

In both branches, however, the life of an ascetic is austere. They renounce material possessions, their family ties, and worldly responsibilities in order to pursue the ideals of the Jain tradition and the goal of liberation. They do not have money, need to rely on laypeople to provide them with alms of food and basic necessities, and are not allowed to use vehicles for travel. Therefore, they walk from *upāśraya* to *upāśraya* (ascetic shelter), constantly on the move in order not to develop attachment to a particular place, and stay in bare rooms devoid of any comforts, sleeping on tiled floors, and abiding by a range of strict monastic codes (one of which is absolute gender segregation). They study Jain texts daily, perform *pratikramaṇa* twice daily, and pull out their hair in the practice of *loch* two times a year. They also regularly preach – particularly during *cāturmāsa* (the four-month monsoon period), when ascetics stay in a single place to avoid causing harm to the teeming life of monsoon India – engage in individual private tuitions, lead morning and evening *pratikramaṇa*, and give blessings to the laity.

The Jain laity typically engages with the ascetics in several ways – giving alms, visiting them in the *upāśraya*, listening to their *vyākhyānas* or *prvacanas* (lectures, sermons), and attending their *pratikramaṇas*. While for the Sthānakvāsīs the *upāśraya* (or *sthānaka*) is the main place of religious congregation, the image-

⁹ Śvetāmbaras are further divided into Derāvāsīs and Sthānakvāsīs, as discussed above. While there is internal diversity in Digambara Jainism as well (as is within the two main Śvetāmbara branches) it is not pertinent to this thesis and I will not explore it further.

¹⁰ Since Digambara Jainism does not allow women to discard their clothes and thus fully renounce all possessions, women are believed to be unable to achieve liberation without first being reborn as a man. Śvetāmbaras accept renunciation and possible liberation for both men and women. For conceptions of gender and sectarian discussions around them see Jaini 1991; Jaini 2010d; Sethi 2009; Dundas 2002, 55-59; Bhattacharyya 2008.

worshipping Derāvāsīs and Digambaras also utilise a temple in addition to their ascetic shelters. Every *derāsar* (a Derāvāsī temple) and *mandir* (a Digambara temple) houses a number of consecrated statues (*mūrtis*) of *tīrthaṅkaras* and other important figures of Jainism, where rituals such as *darśana*, *āratī*, and *pūjā* are typically performed.

In such temples daily rituals are performed as well as the bigger celebrations bringing whole communities together. The Jains follow a specific religious calendar (referred to as *pancāṅga*) that is based on lunar movements and peppered with a number of smaller events that celebrate the important events in the life of the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* (called *kalyāṇakas*). Yet the highlight of the Jain calendar comes sometime in August or September of the Gregorian calendar. For Śvetāmabara Jains (both Derāvāsī and Sthānakvāsī) that is an eight-day celebration of *Paryuṣaṇa*, a festival of renouncing daily luxuries in favour of fasting and asking living beings (both human and non-human) for forgiveness for any harm that might have been done either intentionally or unwittingly during the past year. The Digambara equivalent of *Paryuṣaṇa* is a ten-day festival *Daśa Lakṣaṇa Parvan* celebrated a few days after the Śvetāmabara *Paryuṣaṇa* celebrating ten virtues – forgiveness, humility, honesty, purity, truthfulness, self-restraint, asceticism, study, detachment, and celibacy – and is marked by a similar engagement in ritual and repenting activities (Dundas 2002, 216-217).

Jainism in Daily Life

In addition to explicit rituals and specifically marked religious days,¹¹ there are also smaller, more everyday activities that infuse Jainism into the daily practices of Jains, the major one being food. Jainism has arguably one of the most restrictive dietary practices with all meat, fish, alcohol, eggs, and even certain fruits and vegetables being proscribed.¹² During the monsoon period (*cāturmāsa*) additional items of food are prohibited and at various points during the year Jains are encouraged to abstain from food altogether (e.g., *āyambil oḷī*, individual *tithis*). Lay Jains are known to fast for up to thirty days surviving only on water (or sometimes forgoing water as well),

¹¹ For a good overview of Jain religious festivals and bigger celebrations see Jaini 2010f.

¹² We will explore the subject of Jain dietary rules in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*.

though smaller fasts of eating only once or twice a day are more prevalent. In addition to these straightforward fasts, Jain practice also offers a variety of other fasting styles. *Āyambil* is a fast of eating only once a day, but the food consumed is spice-less and incredibly bland. Another, more rarely undertaken fast called *varṣī tapas*, is a year-long fast, where a day of complete fasting is followed by a day of eating once in a sequence repeating itself for one year. Such fasts are more prominent among ascetics and more religious lay Jains, although fasting in general is seen as an important part of Jain practice.

The doctrinal base for such prominence of food in Jain practice can be found in the Jain concepts of *jīva* and *karma*. *Jīva* is typically translated as life (force), the soul, or the self. Following a dualistic conception of life, Jainism differentiates between the immaterial *jīva*, and the body it possesses, which is composed entirely of matter (*pudgala*) (see Jaini 1998, 98-106). Every living being has a *jīva*, and in Jainism surprisingly many entities are counted as possessing it (in addition to humans, animals, plants, and bacteria, even water, air, stones, and fire are thought to be living beings – in addition to a variety of heavenly and hellish beings [see Jaini 1998, 108-10; Glasenapp 1991, 53]).¹³ Given the abundance of life in the Jain universe and their imperative of non-violence, food becomes an important aspect of implementing *ahiṃsā* in one's daily life.

Jains believe that every *jīva* – no matter how small and primitive – possesses the qualities of infinite knowledge, infinite perception, infinite energy, and infinite bliss (see Jaini 1998, 102-106). Yet the *jīvas* are sullied and weighed down by *karma*, a concept familiar to Hinduism as well as Buddhism, but interpreted in a much more materialist way in Jainism. For Jainism *karma* are minute particles of matter, which get attached to the soul, when it experiences passions and attachments or engages in any sort of *hiṃsīc* (harmful, violent) activity, thus obscuring the soul's innate qualities and keeping it in the realm of *saṃsāra* (see Jaini 1998, 111-127). Based on the types of *karma* various things in a *jīva*'s life are determined – what particular living being it will be reborn as, the health of the body it will possess, the life-span of that body, and a host of positive and negative events that will happen to it in the course of a lifetime (see Glasenapp 1991; Jaini 2010c). The aim of Jain practice is

¹³ We will return to the classification of *jīvas* in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*.

thus to stop the influx of all *karma* and shed the accumulated *karma* through austerities in order for the *jīva* to escape the continuous cycle of rebirth and become liberated. In addition to food restrictions and fasting (as ways of limiting the influx of *karma* and shedding *karmic* bondage), Jains also take care not to hurt other *jīvas* by accidentally stepping on them, killing them with their use of fire or water (when cooking or bathing), and supporting charities that prevent slaughter of animals (particularly during *Paryuṣaṇa*).

For most of its history Jainism existed exclusively in India. Daily ritual activity and ascetic instruction is therefore most easily accessible for Jains living in states and cities with more significant Jain populations (e.g., Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra), while Jains living in Indian states with a smaller Jain presence (e.g., West Bengal, Kerala) struggle to perform rituals or interact with ascetics. Such difficulty of religious engagement is exacerbated for Jains living outside of India, as ascetics are prohibited from using vehicles and therefore traveling abroad, and the accessibility of worship spaces is sometimes non-existent. The Jains living in Leicester are therefore a peculiar example of a Jain community that had to establish itself anew and ascertain the best ways to practice Jainism in diaspora.

The Leicester Jain Community

Leicester as a city

Leicester is a city in the East Midlands of England, slightly east of Birmingham, that is home to around 400,000 people. In 2011 the UK census counted 329,839 Leicester residents,¹⁴ though updated estimates from the Office of National Statistics estimate a population of 405,960 living in Leicester as of July 2018.¹⁵ Besides their 2016 Premier League win and the discovery of King Richard III's body, Leicester's claim to fame is its diversity. In 2008 the Leicester City Council (LCC) estimated that 40% of Leicester's population had a minority ethnic background and if the trend of

¹⁴ UK Census Data. "Leicester". Accessed 17th June 2018. <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/leicester-e06000016#sthash.EZpbOIPJ.dpbs>.

¹⁵ Population UK. "Leicester Population 2018". Accessed 17th June 2018. <https://www.ukpopulation.org/leicester-population/>.

growth continued (there was a 7% increase in ethnic minority residents between 1991 and 2001), Leicester was predicted to soon become one of the first cities in England “to have a majority of people with an ethnic background” (LCC 2008, 5; see LCC 2011, Balderstone 2012, 150). The report predicted Leicester to “reach this milestone sometime after 2011” (LCC 2008, 5), though the transition is not yet confirmed.

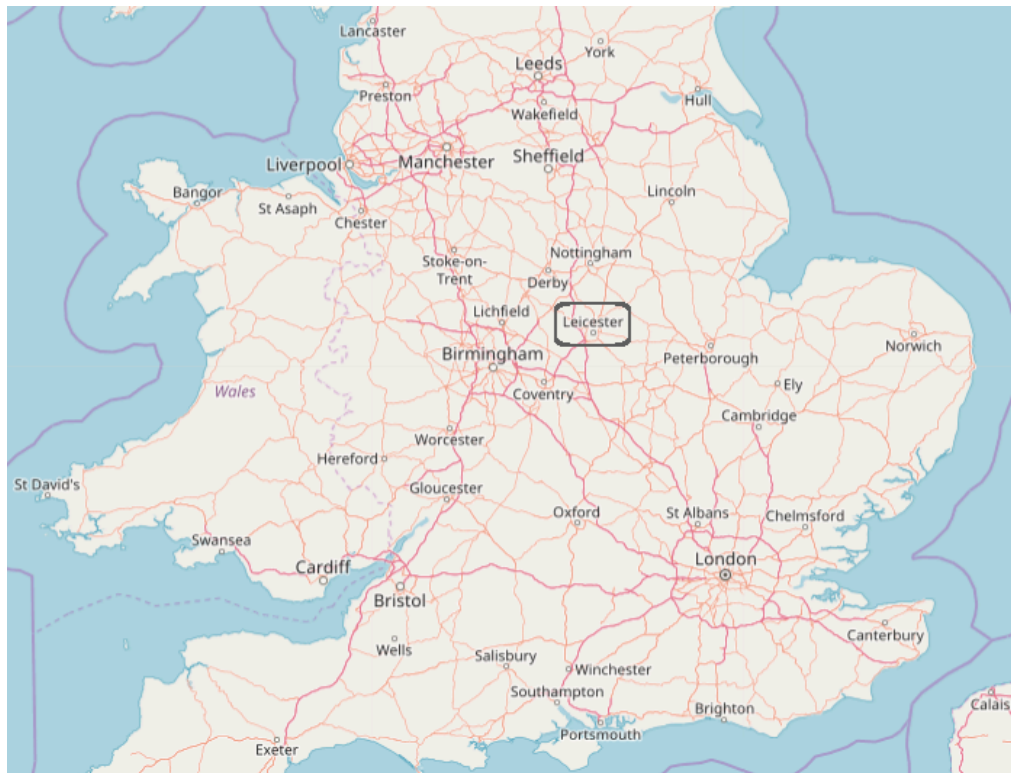


Image 3: Map of central England (source: OpenStreetMap)

Let me paint a statistical picture of Leicester’s diversity. According to the 2011 UK census¹⁶ the Leicester population was composed of 50.6% White, 28.3% Indian, 2.4% Pakistani, 1.1% Bangladeshi, 5.3% other Asian, 6.2% Black, and 6.1% other ethnic backgrounds residents. In addition to English, eight languages were commonly spoken in Leicester: Gujarati was the preferred language of 16% of the city’s residents, Punjabi and Somali 3% each, Urdu 2%, and smaller groups spoke languages such as Hindi, Arabic, Bengali, and Polish (LCC 2008, 10). As can be

¹⁶ UK Census Data. “Leicester”. Accessed 17th June 2018. <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/leicester-e06000016#sthash.EZpbOIPJ.dpbs>.

seen from the linguistic composition of Leicester inhabitants, Gujaratis represent the biggest ethnic minority group in the city. The Runnymede Trust (2012, 3) estimated that 28% of those living in Leicester were actually of Gujarati heritage, though given the linguistic data, they drifted towards speaking more English. Overall, more than 30% of Leicester residents are of South Asian background with most of them being “Indian from either East Africa, particularly Uganda or Kenya, or from Gujarat in India” (LCC 2008, 4). The Leicester City Council (2011, 5) suggested that inward migration from India was still high with 1,000-1,500 people moving to Leicester annually and thus the estimates have likely shifted since 2010.

The city’s ethnic and linguistic diversity also translates into its religious diversity. In 2011¹⁷ 32.4% of Leicester residents identified themselves as Christian, 18.6% as Muslim, 15.2% as Hindu, 4.4.% as Sikh, and 1.1.% as following other religions. Only 496 Leicester residents officially declared themselves as Jain on the national census, though that is an underestimate that is likely the consequence of ingrained historical practices of grouping Jainism with Hinduism¹⁸ and thus the 50,087 Leicester Hindus most likely include at least a few hundred Jains as well. According to the Leicester Council of Faiths (in LCC 2008, 6) the residents of Leicester can engage in religious activities in one hundred and twenty-one Christian churches, thirty-six Muslim mosques, twenty-two Hindu mandirs, seven Sikh gurdwaras, two Jewish synagogues, one Jain temple, and several home-based churches (predominant among African Caribbean and African Pentecostal communities).

Jains in Leicester

Besides the city’s diversity, another thing that makes Leicester interesting is the fact that the city is also the site of the ‘first Jain temple in the Western world’ – the

¹⁷ UK Census Data. “Leicester”. Accessed 17th June 2018. <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/leicester-e06000016#sthash.EZpbOIPJ.dpbs>.

¹⁸ As Dundas wrote (2002, 5-6), colonial legal and administrative practices as well as fluid socio-religious identity categories among Jains in the 19th and 20th century British India have resulted in unclear self-identifications of Jains on censuses even today. Many Jains identify as Hindu on censuses (in both India and the UK) and for the last UK census (in 2011) the English Jain community tried to convince Jains to write-in Jainism as their religion and not simply tick the Hindu box.

Leicester Jain Centre. Opening its doors as a fully consecrated temple in 1988, the Jain Centre is the focal point of a community of around 1,500 Jains that live in Leicester, the suburbs surrounding it, and some residing further afield in smaller towns of the East and West Midlands.

Another important aspect of Leicester is the fact that the first ethnography of a British Jain community was conducted with the Leicester Jains in the early 1980s by Marcus Banks (1992). As part of his doctoral project at the University of Cambridge, Banks researched the social organisation of the Jain community in Leicester and conducted a parallel study of Jain organisation in Jamnagar (Gujarat, India). While mostly interested in the questions of ownership, habitual use of property, *jāti* (or sub-caste) and sectarian divisions, organisation and attendance of religious and social events, and the internal structures guiding the two Jain communities, Banks's work (1987, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1999, 2000, 2003) provides a broader introduction to not only Jainism as it is practiced in the two cities at hand, but also the intricacies of religious change in Leicester Jainism. As will be explored in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, Banks investigated a qualitative difference in expressions of belief among Leicester Jains (especially as compared to Jamnagar Jains), and remains an invaluable source of information on the initial years of community formation and organisation of Leicester Jains. Yet my project does not aspire to replicate Banks's study from three decades earlier. While it does examine the same Leicester Jain community (with a foray into Jamnagar Jainism as well), it focuses on questions of religious adaptation, innovation, and change, with many of the emphases present in Banks's work (e.g., property ownership or *jāti* [sub-caste] boundaries) pushed into the background either due to a different research focus or the changed realities in the field. My study is, nevertheless, indebted to Banks's work, as without his initial research into the Leicester Jains my understanding of historical developments within the community would quite likely be overly-simplistic and much more fragmented.

According to Banks (1992, 153-4; 1994, 239-40), the first Jains arrived in Britain in the early 1960s, mostly directly from India, while some were sent to England from East Africa to study or open businesses. As the East African countries began gaining independence and instituting discriminatory Africanisation policies

against its South Asian residents, many of the Jains living there moved to Britain.¹⁹ Those with investment capital tended to settle in London or Manchester, while those with little money came mostly to Leicester, where employment was easier to find and support was available from the already established Gujarati community (Banks 1994a, 239).

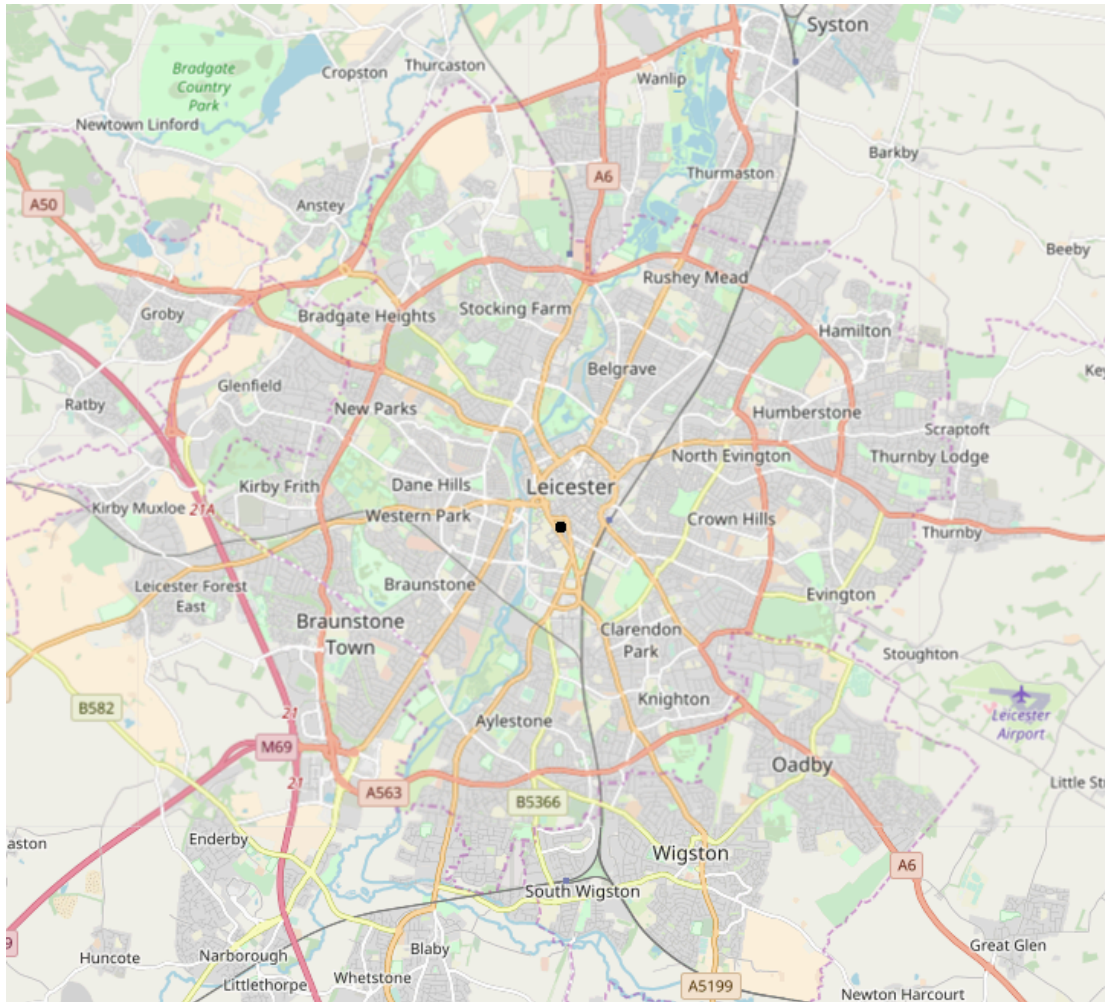


Image 4: Map of Leicester with the location of the Leicester Jain Centre marked (source: OpenStreetMap)

Banks (1994, 241) estimated that there were around nine hundred Jains living in Leicester in the early 1980s. They mostly followed the broader Gujarati patterns of spatial distribution by settling in the areas of Highfields and Belgrave Road (east and

¹⁹ The migration history of the Leicester Jains is discussed in *Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*.

north-east of the city-centre respectively), though some outward migration to more affluent areas was present in the 1980s already. Leicester Jains were generally moderately prosperous and although a small number had become very wealthy and several more worked in high-status professions (in medicine or finance with accountancy being particularly popular), “the community as a whole [was] best described as lower middle-class” in the 1980s (Banks 1994a, 242). At the time of my research, the Leicester Jains could still fit into Banks’s designation, though a level of upward mobility was also visible. In general the Leicester Jains were very similar “in their patterns of housing, occupational and educational mobility, household structure and composition etc.” to other local Gujarati communities and there was little that overtly distinguishes them from Leicester Gujarati Hindus, save their religious affiliation (*ibid.*, 243).

From the nine hundred Jains living in Leicester at the time of Banks’s fieldwork (1982 and 1983) to my own fieldwork in 2015 and 2016 the number of Jains had increased to around 1,500. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Jains in Leicester and its surroundings for two reasons. As already mentioned above, the local census data are not a reliable source of such estimates as Jains regularly identify themselves as Hindu on official documents. Thus the census tends to grossly underestimate the Jain population both in Leicester and on the national level. Secondly, the internal records²⁰ of the Leicester Jain Centre also do not paint an accurate picture of the number of Leicester Jains. Although attempting to broaden the number of paying members, it was common practice in the community in the past that only one person per household (or one person per generation of adults living in the same household) would be a paying member of the Leicester Jain Centre and their family would benefit from the membership as well. The Jain Centre had therefore struggled to sign up more people, as many already enjoyed the benefits of family membership.²¹ Internal records of the Leicester Jain Centre counted a little

²⁰ I was able to consult a register of the Leicester Jain Centre’s members and analyse the demographic data contained therein.

²¹ The official members register showed a great diversity of addresses within same surnames, which indicates a slow adoption of membership among family members of already registered household heads.

over nine hundred members in 2016, which positioned my conservative estimates for the actual numbers of Jains in Leicester at around 1,500 as mentioned above.²²

The 1,500 Leicester Jains were a rather small fraction of all the Jains that lived in England. The UK census²³ in 2011 counted 20,288 Jains,²⁴ though the vast majority lived in London with bigger communities of Jains residing in Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester, and in other parts of the UK. The majority of Jain places of worship had also been established in London – a recent survey of Jain buildings conducted by Emma Tomalin and Caroline Starkey (2016) for Historic England identified thirteen dedicated Jain buildings with ten of them being in London (the other three are in Leicester, Birmingham, and Manchester). Since their arrival in the UK, the Jains have established several organisations, associations, and places of worship and we will return to this topic in *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)*.

The Role of Jāti in Community Formation

Although caste (as a social construct prevalent in the literature on Indian societies) does not constitute a major topic of concern to this thesis, it does play a role in the history of the Leicester Jain community and it is therefore necessary for us to discuss it. *Jāti*, a more specific term than the general ‘caste,’ can be defined as a “social identity ascribed by birth” (Beteille 1996, 22) or more precisely as an “endogamous hereditary social group which has a name and is occupationally linked to a fixed position in the local status hierarchy” (Cottam Ellis 1991, 82). Banks (1992, 5), who dealt more extensively with the subject of *jāti* among the Leicester (and Jamnagar) Jains, defined *jātis* as “endogamous groups composed of individuals bearing the same *jati* name.” Often referred to as a ‘sub-caste,’ this endogamous, professional, linguistic, or religious grouping of the Indian society is an organizational principle along which social interactions and community organisations are typically structured and is often linked to a set of surnames, acting as occupational descriptors as well.

²² By more liberal estimates there might be over 2,000 Jains in Leicester.

²³ Office for National Statistics. “What is Your Religion?”. Accessed 17th June 2018. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/articles/whatisyourreligion/2015-01-15>.

²⁴ Similarly as above, that number is likely an underestimate. B. Shah (2014, 518) gives an estimate of up to 30,000 Jains living in the UK.

The Leicester Jains belong to one of two *jātis* – the Visā Śrīmālīs and Hālāri Visā Osvāls. ‘*Visā*’ in both names means ‘twenty’ and designates a slightly higher social status of the group than their ‘*dasā*’ (or ‘ten’) counterparts within the same *jāti* (Banks 1992, 51). ‘Hālāri’ in the name of the Osvāl *jāti* points to their specific geographical origins – Hālār is a historical region on the Saurāṣṭran peninsula in Gujarat roughly corresponding to contemporary districts of Jamnagar, Dwarka, Morbi, and Rajkot. Both the Śrīmālīs and Osvāls “fall broadly within the middle-ranking trading castes (*vania jatis*) of Gujarat” and were the only two predominantly Jain *jātis* to migrate from Gujarat to East Africa – and then on to Leicester (Banks 1994a, 232). Although Śrīmālīs and Osvāls differ in professional origin (Śrīmālīs are traditionally traders and shopkeepers, while Osvāls’ background is primarily in farming), they both trace their recent origins to the town and district of Jamnagar, on the north coast of the Saurāṣṭran peninsula in Gujarat, though Śrīmālīs are less homogenous in their origin than Osvāls.

Large-scale migration of Osvāls and Śrīmālīs to East Africa began during the last two decades of the 19th century and reached a peak during the two World Wars. Osvāl migrants to East Africa “were drawn exclusively from the *bavangami*, a group of fifty-four villages around Jamnagar,” (ibid., 236) while Śrīmālīs tended to come from Jamnagar and the villages surrounding it, but also from other places from the eastern and southern parts of Saurāṣṭra, and sometimes even as far east as Ahmedabad/Amdāvād. Although following a similar timetable in their migration, the two *jātis* differed in their destinations in East Africa – the “Srimalis settled in all three East African territories, but the Oswals mostly confined themselves to Kenya” (ibid., 236). Both engaged in trading and mercantile activities upon their arrival, but the Śrīmālīs also “put a high premium on acquiring greater literacy and managerial skills, so although many sought to establish businesses, the majority actually entered government service,” (ibid., 237) making them even more spatially scattered.

In the 1960s East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania gained independence and started instituting Africanisation policies that discriminated against their South Asian populations (including the Jains). Many South Asians thus voluntarily or forcibly left East Africa in the early 1970s in what became known as ‘the Exodus’ – while some left for India, many moved to Britain, or travelled onward

to North America.²⁵ After a bigger influx of Kenyan Osvāls, the Osvāls settled in England were quick to establish a *jāti* organisation called the ‘Oswal Association of the UK’ in 1968, aided by the community-formation experience they brought over from Gujarat and East Africa. The association connected some 4,000 English Osvāls (ballooning to around 15,000 Osvāls by early 1980s [Banks 1992, 153]), while Śrīmālīs mostly arrived to England slightly later – after the East African crisis in late 1960s and early 1970s – and remained in close association with members of other trading *jātis* loosely connected into a Navnāt (“a federation of *jātis* brought together for business and sometimes marriage purposes” [ibid., 248]). While Osvāls were and continue to be the larger group nation-wide, they tended to settle in London and thus were outnumbered by Śrīmālīs in the city of Leicester (ibid., 154).

Leicester Jain Centre

As Banks (1992, 154) claimed, “[a]lmost all the Srimalis and Oswals in Britain are Jain. The Oswals are exclusively Deravasi, as are about half the Srimalis, the other half being Sthanakavasi.” Since Śrīmālīs predominate in Leicester and there are also a few families from other *jātis* (and not necessarily from Gujarat) in Leicester as well, there is a sectarian variety present in Leicester that is not as important in London, where Deravasi Osvāls prevail. Since establishment of separate worship spaces for different branches of Jainism (Deravasi, Sthānakvāsī, and Digambara) or the two distinct *jātis* (Osvāls and Śrīmālīs) was not feasible both because of the lack of funds and the small numbers of each sub-group, the Leicester Jains started organising as a group soon after the arrival of East African Jains in early 1970s and in 1973 they officially founded the Jain Samaj (‘the Jain community’).

With the dual purpose of being a religious and social organisation, the Jain Samaj joined all Jains living in Leicester, regardless of sectarian and *jāti* differences starting with around two hundred members. While the Jain Samaj was a joint enterprise of both Osvāls and Śrīmālīs, the initial impetus came from the Śrīmālīs, as Osvāls already had a national *jāti* organisation (ibid., 159). The Samaj organised bigger functions for several dozen people and hired halls for major celebrations like

²⁵ The migration history of the Leicester Jains will be discussed in *Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*.

Paryuṣaṇa. During the first few years the two *jātis* jointly established a provisional *pāṭhśālā* (children’s religious school) held on Sunday mornings in the home of one of the organisers, where children were taught to memorise basic Jain *mantras* and ritual recitations accompanied by a simple explanation of their meaning (ibid., 161).

The inter-*jāti* cooperation disintegrated in 1977, some four years after the formal establishment of the Jain Samaj. Due to implicit competitiveness and latent animosities between the two *jātis* brought along from Gujarat and East Africa, in addition to the fact that the alliance had no “significance outside the shared religious identity” (ibid., 161), the Osvāl and Śrīmālī split was initiated by a small dispute over food provided at a post-*Paryuṣaṇa* communal feast (ibid., 160). The two *jātis* continued to remain organisationally separate to this day – the Śrīmālīs congregated around the Leicester Jain Centre and the Osvāls constituted a branch of the national Oswal Association, hiring halls around the city to celebrate bigger occasions – though the attendance at religious events organised by either group overlapped to a certain extent.

After the *jāti* split, the Śrīmālīs were left with the name and the structure of the Jain Samaj and instead of reframing it into a *jāti* organisation (as the Osvāls did within their own group), they decided to pursue a religious course with an aspiration to transcend their *jāti* identity and represent Jainism in general. As Banks (ibid., 166) wrote, this decision was based on several reasons: the religious dedication of the then leadership of the Samaj that acted as a driving force, the unifying factor that Jainism represented for an otherwise diverse *jāti*, and the higher likelihood to attract public funding as a religious rather than as a *jāti* organisation. With the funds accumulated before the split, internal membership donations, patronage from within the UK and abroad, and several successful applications to various local and central governmental bodies, in 1978 the Jain Samaj amassed enough money to buy a disused Congregational chapel in the centre of Leicester for £41,000 to become the Leicester Jain Centre (ibid., 167).

The chapel bought in 1978 was dark and damp, housing a handful of pigeons, and generally in need of some serious refurbishment. To that end the Jain Samaj obtained funding from several sources: the local and central government grants contributed some £86,000 by 1982 (Banks 1992, 168); the Samaj’s own membership

contributed funds by paying membership fees and giving additional donations; and the Samaj was able to draw on its sympathisers from the UK, Belgium (where a wealthy community of diamond-trading Jains lives), and India to contribute to the refurbishment. Through the next decade the spacious chapel was partitioned into two floors (roofing over the balcony around the main chapel) – the ground floor designated for social activities and the first floor prepared for its use as a worship space. The stained glass windows were replaced with ones depicting scenes from the life of Mahāvīra, the floors were carpeted, and gradually temple structures of carved sandstone were brought over from India.²⁶



Image 5: Leicester Jain Centre (image by the author)

In 1985 consecrated *mūrtis* of Śānti (the sixteenth *tīrthaṅkara* and the main *mūrti* of the Leicester Jain Centre), Pārśva (the twenty-third *tīrthaṅkara*), and Mahāvīra were brought from India (they were consecrated in a ceremony in Rajasthan the year before) and on 20th July 1988 the consecrated *mūrtis* were put in

²⁶ For a more detailed description of the Leicester Jain Centre see *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday* and *Appendix 2: Leicester Jain Centre*.

the inner sanctum (*garbha-gr̥ha*, the permanent place of abode) of the Derāvāsī temple in the Leicester Jain Centre.²⁷ On 22nd July 2018 the Leicester Jain Centre celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremony with some five hundred Jains attending the event from across England.

In the intervening thirty years (1988–2018) the Centre developed and diversified in the organisational, worship-related, and architectural sense. In addition to the structural refurbishments done to the building prior to the instalment of *mūrtis*, the Jain Centre now also has a range of museum cabinets, a well-stocked though seldom used library, a functioning kitchen, an elevator, an intricate white-marble portal, and a range of smaller upgrades sprinkled around the building. In terms of worship, the community’s range of ritual activities has been expanded with the arrival of *mūrtis* on which *pūjā* can be performed, and – perhaps most importantly – with the hiring of two ritual specialists from India. A *pujārī* (temple servant, ritual assistant), who takes care of the preparation and disposal of substances used in worship, makes sure the ritual activity in the Centre is able to be conducted smoothly, and occasionally leads smaller communal rituals (such as *snātra pūjās*).

The more important position is the so-called ‘Minister of Religion,’ a position unknown to Jains in India and more akin to a preacher than a *pujārī*. During my fieldwork (and from 2001 to 2016) the position was filled by Jayeshbhai, who was respected in the Jain Centre and across England, delivered lectures during bigger communal events, taught the adult religious classes, and was in charge of the religious leadership within the community. The position was established in early-1990s and previously filled by a number of different individuals brought over from India, devised to counteract the absence of Jain ascetics in Leicester and ensure the availability of a source of religious knowledge to the community.²⁸

²⁷ Leicester Jain Centre. “Our History”. Accessed 15th June 2018. www.jaincentreleicester.com/about/our-history.

²⁸ The position of Minister of Religion and Jayeshbhai’s role in the Leicester Jain community will be explored in *Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*.

The Leicester Jain ‘community’

As alluded to above, the Leicester Jain Centre sprung out of a Śrīmālī led effort to establish a worship space, while the Leicester Osvāls established their own *jāti*-based organisation. In 1980 (three years after the split) an organisational reconciliation of the two *jātis* was enacted in London, where various Osvāl and Śrīmālī leaders agreed that the Leicester Jain Centre should be “a place of meeting for all Jains, irrespective of *jati*, origin, or residence and that the name of the Samaj should be changed to ‘Jain Samaj (Europe), Leicester’” (Banks 1992, 170). With the change in name the religious character of the organisation was emphasised and according to Banks (ibid., 171) the reconciliation between the two *jāti* groups in Leicester was still on-going in the early 1980s (only a handful of years after the split).

By the time of my fieldwork (in 2015/2016) the two groups still remained organisationally separate (e.g., the Leicester branch of the Oswal Association was holding their own *Paryuṣaṇa* celebrations in a hired hall), yet there was no palpable animosity between the two groups. I was told that a number of years before my fieldwork the leadership of the Leicester Jain Centre (or, officially, the Jain Samaj [Europe], Leicester) went to the Osvāl *Paryuṣaṇa* celebrations and in the *Paryuṣaṇa* spirit of seeking forgiveness for harm done intentionally or unwittingly asked the Osvāls for forgiveness and encouraged them to use the resources available to them at the Leicester Jain Centre.

While this gesture did not result in an instant and complete reconciliation and merger of the two groups, it nevertheless resulted in more friendly relations between them. During my fieldwork a number of Osvāl Leicester Jains attended events held at the Jain Centre (e.g., during *Paryuṣaṇa* some Osvāls would come for the morning lecture at the Jain Centre and then perform the evening *pratikramaṇa* with other Osvāls at their own celebrations in a hired hall) and many Śrīmālī Jains active in the Jain Centre would attend the bigger events organised by the Osvāls as well, if they did not overlap with events at the Jain Centre. Since events at the Jain Centre were held more regularly and were often more elaborate than the events organised by the Osvāls, many Osvāls also utilised the religious activities on offer in the Leicester Jain Centre and did not see any incompatibility between their *jāti* identity and the Jain Centre as the place they used for worship.

In a lot of ways *jāti* identity among Leicester Jains seems to have lost its importance since Banks's fieldwork in the early 1980s. Although Banks' foregrounding of *jāti* in Leicester might already have been an analytical emphasis that did not correspond to the lived experience of Leicester Jains, I believe that a certain degree of *jāti*-consciousness was nevertheless present in the first decade after the split, which was explicitly framed in terms of *jāti* identity. Therefore, it is much more significant that *jāti* seems to have largely faded into the background of Leicester Jainism. The relationships between the two organisations and individuals within them have found an equilibrium of co-existence, while (almost surprisingly) the youth in the Jain Centre was rather unaware of even the existence of the Oswal Association in Leicester. While that might be the consequence of a prior consolidation of influence in the hands of the Leicester Jain Centre, it nevertheless signals the relative unimportance Leicester Jains (and particularly their youth) placed on the subject of *jāti* in general.

Given that Leicester Jainism is by no means a unified entity – besides the Leicester Jain Centre and the Leicester branch of the Oswal Association there is also a small but significant group of Śrīmad Rājacandra Mission (Dharampur) followers in the city, not to mention the internal sectarian diversity of the Jain Centre itself – how then can I speak of a Leicester Jain 'community'? As mentioned above, there is a significant overlap between the different groups in terms of their attendance: many Osvāls attend the events at the Leicester Jain Centre (and vice versa) and practically all Śrīmad Rājacandra followers were also members of the Leicester Jain Centre. The term 'Leicester Jain community' in this thesis therefore subsumes all these groups under an abstract umbrella-term. While it recognises the internal diversity of Leicester Jains, it nonetheless attempts to highlight the commonalities in their practice of Jainism and the elements of religious change that impact them in diaspora. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that my fieldwork was conducted predominantly in the Leicester Jain Centre – while I made sure to visit many of the events organised by the Oswal Association and the Śrīmad Rājacandra followers, the Jain Centre acted as the focal point of my fieldwork and thus dominates the data presented in this thesis.

With this I conclude the discussion of *jāti* in this thesis. While it has played an important role in the history of the Jain community in Leicester, *jāti* does not have a major impact on the main topic of this thesis. Thus while the understanding of complex and multi-layered relationships that exist among Jains in Leicester adds to our understanding of the community, it will not be a significant part of the chapters that follow.

Research Design

As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this thesis aims to answer a rather straight-forward question – *How does the interpretation and practice of religion change as a consequence of migration and life in diaspora?* – by focusing on a case study of the Leicester Jain community. Given that change is something that only becomes apparent through time, the most suitable method to answering such a question would be a longitudinal study, preferably one that followed a group of individuals adhering to the same religious tradition before, during, and after they moved to a new environment, tracking the religious change as it occurred. Yet that is not possible, not least because the Leicester Jain community is already in Leicester and has already spent generations outside of their traditional environment of Gujarat. Thus I was not able to study Leicester Jainism *as* it changed, but instead adopted an intergenerational perspective to help me understand the temporal shifts in religious interpretation and practice the Leicester Jain community had gone through in its past.

Before going into the field I delineated four ideal-typical generational categories based on different life-stages of a typical Leicester Jain (gleaned during my Master's fieldwork) on which I focused during my interviews. These generations were:

- 'young adult' or pre-family creation period (15 to 25 years of age),
- 'adult' or young family stage (25 to 40 years old),
- 'middle-aged' or families with grown children (40- to 65-year-olds),
- and 'older' or grandparents stage (65 to 90 years of age).

Delineating these four generations before going to Leicester, helped me ensure an equal representation of voices across the generational spectrum and proved particularly helpful, since older respondents were easier to recruit than younger ones.

A focus on generational distribution allowed me to continuously check the balance between generations and consequently make sure I put enough effort into recruiting younger interviewees. These generational categories lost their utility once I started the analysis of gathered data, as the four artificially delineated generations did not correspond to the generational differences I observed in Leicester – instead of four, three age groups or generations emerged as significant and I explore them in depth in *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)*.

While my research question and the generational categories employed were formulated before I started conducting fieldwork, I was conscious of not trying to pre-emptively influence my analysis or limit my acquisition of data by formulating specific hypotheses. Instead, I chose to adopt the approach of ‘grounded theory’²⁹ and let the data speak for itself before employing any theoretical frameworks to shape the gathered data. The only theoretical framework – or rather disposition – I did employ while in the field was the view of the Leicester Jain community as a diasporic community (more on this in *Chapter 2: Leicester Jains as Diaspora*), as such a designation made my inquiry open to sensibilities of transnational connections, systemic disadvantages, and influences of migratory patterns, rather than limiting it to a particular theoretical framework. Instead, I armed myself with plenty of questions and some preliminary knowledge gathered from literature on Jainism, Jain practice in India, Jain diaspora, and the historical data on the Leicester Jain community, packed up my bags, and headed into the field with an open mind.

Methodology

Combined with preliminary visits, I spent approximately nine months conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Leicester (England, UK), in addition to a three-month-long span of fieldwork in Jamnagar (Gujarat, India). As I was examining religious change engendered by migration, I believed it was important to not only understand the diasporic Leicester community and the changes that occurred within it after their move to England, but to also explore the Jainism practiced in a non-diasporic environment and the changes that are occurring in Jamnagar. Having a clearer

²⁹ For grounded theory see Glaser and Strauss 2006 [1967], Corbin and Strauss 2008, and Engler 2011.

understanding of how Jainism is practiced in Jamnagar thus gave me a better grasp of changes in Leicester. For example, without studying the role of Jain ascetics in Jamnagar,³⁰ I would not be able to speak confidently about the effects of ascetic absence in Leicester. Similarly, I could not claim that the role of food in Jainism has changed in Leicester,³¹ if I did not explore dietary practices of Jains living in Jamnagar as well. Therefore, the thesis was made richer and our understanding of religious change in Jain diaspora much improved by a two-sited fieldwork employed in the project.

A Tale of Two Cities

While London is home to the majority of English Jains and has the highest number of Jain worship spaces (as mentioned above), I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Leicester for a number of reasons. *First* is the fact that the community of around 1,500 Jains in Leicester is smaller, more spatially condensed, and easier to navigate (than the London Jain community), which grants my research greater applicability and ensures that the sample of Leicester Jains that I spoke to during my fieldwork is more representative of the Leicester Jain community. *Second*, Leicester is a smaller and more manageable city, where it is easier to travel between different parts of the city and therefore more conducive to ethnographic research. *Third*, the Leicester Jain community has a relatively long history in the city, a clear organisational structure, a well-established position in the city's wider religious landscape, and owns the UK's first Jain temple. This meant that the community was in a more stable phase of community-development during my fieldwork (especially when compared to the tumultuous period during which Banks's fieldwork was conducted) and the changes in religious interpretation and practice that I was able to observe indicated wider patterns and trends of religious change in the community and not just temporary developments. And the *last* – though rather important – reason for choosing Leicester as my field site was Banks's book that set me on the path of studying the Leicester Jains in the first place. The knowledge distilled in Banks's book (1992) and

³⁰ I will explore the role of ascetics in Jamnagar in *Chapter 6 (Echoes from India)* and their absence in Leicester in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*.

³¹ See *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*.

accompanying publications (1987, 1991a, 1991b, 1994) on the Leicester Jain community in the early 1980s acted not only as a guide to the basic features of the community, but also as a source of historical and comparative insight for deepening my understanding of various changes the Leicester Jain community has undergone since Banks's study was conducted in 1982 and 1983.



Image 6: Maps of Leicester (top) and Jamnagar (bottom) (source: Stamen Maps)

Banks's work is also the reason I chose Jamnagar as the non-diasporic comparison site to Leicester. *Organizing Jainism in India and England* (Banks 1992) is composed of two halves – one set in Leicester and the other in Jamnagar. Banks's work therefore not only provided me with the historical and comparative material on the Leicester Jains, but also their non-diasporic counterparts in Jamnagar (Gujarat,

India) (Banks 1987, 1999, 2000, 2003). Jamnagar is a mid-sized town in rural Gujarat with roughly 600,000 inhabitants (Jamnagar City Census 2011).³² In addition to Banks's work providing a suitable introduction to my field site in Gujarat, the reasons for choosing Jamnagar over other cities in Gujarat are similar to the ones given for Leicester – it is a smaller city with roughly half a million inhabitants, of comparable size to Leicester (which has approximately 400,000 inhabitants) and of equal ease when it comes to getting around the city. There were also several existing family connections between Leicester and Jamnagar at the time of my fieldwork and I was able to draw on them to help me settle in Jamnagar. Yet the focus of my project was on diasporic Jainism and I therefore did not spend an equal amount of time in both cities, favouring Leicester and the Leicester Jain community over Jamnagar.

From Paryuṣaṇa to Paryuṣaṇa

I conducted my doctoral fieldwork in the second year of my PhD programme (2015/2016), though these stays in Leicester and Jamnagar were not the first times I visited the cities. I spent six weeks conducting fieldwork in Leicester in May and June of 2014 as part of my Master's dissertation work. The connections and knowledge I gained during that stay greatly helped me in preparing for my doctoral fieldwork and ensured a smooth start once I arrived in Leicester in 2015. I also visited Jamnagar for two weeks in July 2015 in order to establish preliminary connections with local Jains and familiarise myself with the city. Outside of these preliminary visits, I conducted my doctoral fieldwork in three segments:

1. *Leicester I*. I began my fieldwork on the eve of *Paryuṣaṇa* in early September 2015 and stayed in Leicester until late December of the same year.
2. *Jamnagar*. In mid-January 2016 I moved to Jamnagar to undertake a shorter parallel fieldwork study and left Gujarat in mid-March 2016 after nine weeks of intense fieldwork.

³² Jamnagar and its Jain residents will be the focus of *Chapter 6: Echoes from India*.

3. *Leicester 2.* I returned to Leicester in the beginning of May 2016 and stayed there until the end of *Paryuṣaṇa*, which in 2016 ended with a fast-breaking ceremony on 6th September.

Interviews and Observations

My primary method of data collection were semi-structured open-ended interviews that I conducted with twenty Jains in Leicester and seven Jains in Jamnagar.³³ I recorded sixty-four hours of interviews varying in length from a quick forty-minute session to ten hours of conversation over four sittings. Although I had a list of pre-prepared questions and topics of discussion connected to individuals' interpretation and practice of Jainism that I used as guidelines for interviews,³⁴ I only used them as a general outline of the topics that should be discussed at some point during the conversation, but otherwise allowed the interview to flow naturally and be led by my informants. As the interview progressed I incorporated most of the questions on my list into our conversation at various points of the interview and thus covered all the important aspects of religious practice and change with most of my informants.

I did, however, change both the individual interview questions and the range of topics discussed based on whom I was interviewing so that I included specialised knowledge possessed by the informant and gradually shortened the interview to only themes that emerged as most relevant for my project. Thus, while I started my fieldwork discussing every possible aspect of Jain doctrine, practice, and history with every informant (often resulting in several hours of recorded interviews), by the end I was able to conduct more focused and much shorter interviews on specific subjects that I had identified as most salient to the question of religious change.

Since recruiting older Leicester Jains as informants was easier than establishing rapport with the Leicester Jain youth, the attention I paid to the generational distribution of my interviewees outlined above was crucial, as it enabled me to keep track of the number of representatives of each generation I had interviewed. Once I noticed the generational imbalance of my interviews, I made efforts to recruit

³³ A 'Level One' research ethics (self) assessment was completed and approved by my primary supervisor Dr Naomi Appleton before commencing fieldwork in 2015.

³⁴ See *Appendix 1* for the most extensive list of questions.

younger informants, and once that failed too, I decided to conduct a focus group to discuss the youth's views on Jainism in Leicester.³⁵ In addition to the youth focus group (which included nine respondents between fifteen and twenty-five years of age) I also conducted a focus group with six adults,³⁶ and since both of these focus groups were conducted towards the end of my fieldwork – during *Paryuṣaṇa* 2016 in order to maximise attendance – I was able to narrow down the range of topics discussed to only the most important ones and thus ensure a greater usefulness of the data for my project.

In addition to the interviews I conducted in both field sites, the analysis presented in this thesis relies heavily on participant observations that I conducted in Jain places of worship and homes of local Jains. I attended bigger communal rituals, smaller everyday *pūjās*, community celebrations of specific events, classes of religious education for children and adults, lectures or sermons by ascetics and religious leaders, processions, social occasions, and a myriad of other events. Alongside these organised events I also spent time simply sitting in Jain places of worship and observing the comings and goings of local Jains, their actions within the space, and the rituals they performed. While I tended to keep on the fringes of any actions taking place during my observations, I was often encouraged to participate in the rituals and celebrations taking place. I mostly obliged and joined in the action whether it was participating in a communal *pūjā*, singing, dancing, or otherwise expressing belonging to the religious community. Through such actions I solidified my reputation in the community as someone genuinely interested in Jainism and made myself more visible to all members of the local Jain community. I took detailed notes during and after all observations – whether passive or active – and they heavily informed my understanding of the Leicester and Jamnagar Jain communities.

³⁵ A 'Level Two' full research ethics assessment was completed and approved by a member of the Ethics in Research Committee at the School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, before the youth focus group was carried out in September 2016.

³⁶ Outlines of both of the focus groups' discussion questions can be found in *Appendix 1*.



Image 7: Participating in *sānti kalas* (pitcher of peace) at the Leicester Jain Centre (image by the author)

As this thesis is built on ethnographic fieldwork, it should go without saying that a substantial amount of information was gained from informal interactions and conversations I had with members of the Jain communities in both Leicester and Jamnagar. While I recorded official interviews with a limited number of people in both locations, I spoke about the same topics with many more Jains, who did not have the time to sit down with me for a formal interview. While I am not able to quote their words beyond the few sentences that I was able to scribble down after our interactions, such passing conversations provided me with plenty of information, new ideas, and support for the data gathered in my interviews.

In addition to the two main research methods and the continuous informal interaction with local Jains, I also utilised secondary methods, though they played only minor roles in my subsequent analysis of the data, yet it pays to mention them here. I undertook a survey of Leicester newspapers mentioning the local Jain community and the documentation submitted to the local authorities at the Record

Office of Leicestershire. I analysed the written materials published by the Leicester Jain Centre, the materials used for children's religious education in the Centre, and conducted an analysis of material objects within the Jain Centre itself. Just before concluding my fieldwork I also conducted a short survey of Leicester Jains, which was filled out by one hundred and twenty Leicester Jains attending the 2016 *Paryuṣaṇa*, the results of which sporadically feature in the thesis. While in Jamnagar I did not employ as many secondary methods, though I did undertake a spatial analysis of several Jain worship buildings and analysed the distribution of Jain sites around the city (see *Chapter 6: Echoes from India*).

Language and Terminology

The vast majority of Leicester Jains speak Gujarati – the older members of the community as their mother tongue and the younger ones as the language of communication with their families and religious elders. The religious instruction of adults is conducted in Gujarati,³⁷ signage all around the Leicester Jain Centre is written in the curvy letters of the Gujarati script, and the melodies of Gujarati parlance echo within the walls of the Jain Centre and within the homes of Leicester Jains. Yet given their environment, the Leicester Jains are also – to varying degrees – proficient in English. For newer arrivals and elderly members of the community English rolls more reluctantly off their tongues, but for the youth it represents the safe harbour of a language of everyday use.

For a researcher like myself, some familiarity with Gujarati was necessary, though I was not able to reach fluency either before or during my fieldwork and therefore had to use English in my interviews and conversations with the Jains. Although that undoubtedly affected the range of people I could speak to, the topics I was able to discuss with them, and the phrasing of their responses to my questions, I do not believe it had a significant detrimental effect on the quality of the data I was able to gather – for two reasons. *Firstly*, even for those not as proficient in English as their more talented co-religionists, their use of the English language was nevertheless good and effective in everyday conversations. Most of the people I spoke to had few

³⁷ As will be discussed in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*, religious education of children is conducted in English and Gujarati is taught in parallel (but separate) language classes.

problems getting their point across and discussing topics of interest with me. *Secondly*, I acquired most of the Jainism-specific Gujarati (and Ardhamāgadhī) terminology and was therefore able to converse about more complex theological topics while still using only the limited vocabulary of conversational English. As a consequence of these two factors I was able to conduct interviews in English as well as access the wealth of knowledge on complex topics of change in the interpretation and practice of Jainism in Leicester.

Since I was not fluent in Gujarati and could hold a simple conversation only with great difficulty, the utilisation of English in my interviews spilled over from Leicester to my fieldwork in Jamnagar as well. There, the knowledge of English among local Jains was more limited than in Leicester, yet I was still able to interview and talk to a range of people about religious practice and change in English. Given that Jains in India as well as abroad are typically highly educated, many Jamnagar Jains were able to communicate with me in English without major difficulties. While the utilisation of English in my research curtailed the number of people I was able to talk to and skewed my sample towards wealthier and more educated Jamnagar Jains, I nevertheless acquired data from a range of different people and supported it with observations I made in Jain homes, places of worship, and at various Jain events, even if I was unable to do so in their first language.

Although English was the primary language of my research and was utilised in interviews, focus groups, informal conversations, and observations, Gujarati (or Ardhamāgadhī) words and names nevertheless play a prominent role in this thesis. There are religious concepts, names, and even filler words that are not English and should therefore find their written expressions in the Gujarati script. Yet outside of *Chapter 6 (Echoes from India)*, where geographical locations are written in both English and Gujarati, the reader will not find much Gujarati script in the text and readers used to the diacritical marks of classic transliteration will soon notice the lack of dots and lines on Gujarati words in the chapters that follow. I have instead decided to adopt the emic writing of Gujarati words prevalent in the Leicester Jain community, where Gujarati words are written without diacritical marks and often utilise different ways of writing a Gujarati word with the Latin script of English (e.g., instead of writing *ś* or *ṣ*, a simple *sh* would be used, and *v* would often be substituted

by a *w*). Thus while an academic text would call the most prominent branch of Jainism Śvetāmbara, the writings in the Leicester Jain Centre and its publications would spell it Shwetambar. Which brings us to another difference worth pointing out. Unlike in Sanskrit and Ardhamāgadhī, Gujarati speakers do not pronounce the last *a* in a word, if it is not an *ā*, and thus they omit it from the written representations of the word as well.³⁸ *Jīva* (the soul, or the self) thus becomes *jiv*, while *pūjā* remains *puja*.

All this brings us to the explanation of how Gujarati words are written in this thesis. While I have adopted the standard academic spelling of prominent figures, key concepts, and branches of Jainism in the chapter so far, in the rest of the thesis I am adopting the spellings of the Leicester Jain community. The last ford-maker of Jainism will thus no longer be called *Mahāvīra*, but instead *Mahavir-swami*. Which again brings us to another feature of the Gujarati language that appears in this thesis – the reverential suffixes used when discussing and addressing deities and people older (or otherwise higher in status) than the speaker. Keeping in line with the emic vocabulary used among the Jains, I adopted the reverential suffixes when discussing *tirthankars* (ford-makers), *devs* and *devis* (male and female deities), and their *murtis* (images). Thus the reader might encounter mentions of Mahavir-swami, Rushabh-dev, Parshva-nath, Sarasvati-devi, or Padmavati-mata throughout the text, but should know that the use of the reverential suffixes does not signal my own veneration for the figures discussed and is instead a representation of emic speech.

Similarly, the names of living Jains often also carry reverential suffixes in this thesis. The two most prominent ones are *-bhai* and *-ben*, representing Gujarati words for brother (bhāī, બહાઈ) and sister (bahen, બહેન), while the suffix *-ji* is also used in everyday parlance (e.g., *sadhvi-ji*, a Jain female ascetic). In Gujarati communities one should use the reverential suffixes of *-bhai* and *-ben* whenever talking to or about someone of higher age or status³⁹ and I have adopted this practice in the thesis

³⁸ On a technical note, *r* is also not pronounced as *ri* in Gujarati, but as *ru*. Sanskrit is thus pronounced as Sanskrit and Rṣabha (the first ford-maker of Jainism) as Rushabh.

³⁹ In that way the Gujarati reverential suffixes are similar to the ‘formal you’ that expresses social distance and respect in languages such as German or Spanish. Similarly, even elderly members of the Jain community used the reverential suffix *-bhai*, when referring to the religious leader of the Leicester Jain community (i.e., Jayeshbhai, a man in his forties) in order to express respect for his religious knowledge and the role he played in the community.

as well – the names of individuals older than me are written with reverential suffixes (e.g., Jayeshbhai, Ushaben), while for those younger than me I only used their first names.

At the end of the thesis the reader will also find a *Glossary*, which I have compiled using a number of academic sources (Kristi L. Wiley's *The A-to-Z of Jainism* [2014] was of great help) and distilled knowledge acquired in the field. It should help the reader in remembering the meaning of certain technical words used in discussions of Jain belief and practice, as well as provide a useful overview of major emphases in Jainisms I encountered in Leicester and Jamnagar.

Change, Difference, and Continuity

For a research exploring religious change, it is of vital importance to further define two specific terms: 'difference' and 'change'. While the two concepts are related and often attached to similar developments, there are subtle differences in what they signify. In this thesis I define '*difference*' as a discrepancy in understanding, interpreting, practicing, or enacting Jain beliefs and practices between members of a community within a single moment in time (i.e., the time of my fieldwork) and '*change*' as a difference that becomes apparent through time. In both cases the thesis highlights differences and changes that members of the community observed and reported themselves, as well as those that I identified through interviews and observations in the field.

Since difference is the only concept out of the two that I was able to observe during my fieldwork, the discussions of change in this thesis are of a more hypothetical nature and are rather informed speculations than observable developments. Thus, the difference in interpretation and practice of Jainism between older and younger Leicester Jains, for example, is an element I was able to observe during my stay in Leicester and corroborate through interviews, while in describing engendering factors and contributing influences I venture into the theoretical territory of change. That, of course, does not mean that my discussions of religious change are not grounded on extensive analysis of the gathered data, simply that engaging in social scientific research is always – to an extent – a speculative endeavour. And my research is no different.

Although this thesis relies heavily on the language of change, it should be emphasised that change also implicitly assumes the presence of its opposite, continuity. My research inevitably looked at continuities within expressions of Jainism among different generations of Leicester Jains as well as between practices of Jainism in Leicester and Jamnagar. Although change is foregrounded in the thesis that does not mean that continuity was absent from my findings. On the contrary, without a significant level of continuity, one would not be able to claim that the religious tradition practiced in the Leicester Jain Centre was Jainism at all. The majority of my fieldwork in fact dealt with continuity and it was difference and change that I had to carefully uncover under the layers of continuity in religious practice. It is also not true that change only occurs in diasporic environments. As much as a change in social environment brought about by migration can influence religious practice and spark religious change, so can change gradually develop in a familiar environment without external influences affecting its course. Therefore, change is not only something present in the Leicester Jain community, but also a facet of Jamnagar Jainism. Although the change in diasporic practice of Jainism is arguably more extreme and abrupt as the gradual change in Jainism's traditional environments of India, religious traditions and the practices associated with them change everywhere and all the time.

Structure of the Thesis

Following the *Introduction*, there are seven chapters that explore different aspects of religious change in the Leicester Jain community. Each individual chapter is centred around an element of religious change and explores it in depth with the last chapter before the *Conclusion* (i.e., *Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*) drawing together all the individual discussions into an analytic model of societal influence on diasporic religious practice.

In general – and only roughly – the thesis could be divided into theoretical and ethnographic chapters. *Ethnographic chapters* represent the core of the thesis and are structured around original data gathered during fieldwork. *Chapters 3 (Historical Trajectory)*, *4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, *5 (Transforming the Everyday)*, and *6*

(Echoes from India) are based on analysis of data gathered through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observations with the Jains in Leicester (and Jains in Jamnagar for *Chapter 6*). The *theoretical chapters* bookend the ethnographic chapters and position the ethnographic content within wider scholarship. *Chapters 2 (Leicester Jains as Diaspora)*, *7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*, and *8 (Conclusion)* are thus primarily concerned with providing a theoretical framework to the ethnographic analysis, putting the data into historical perspective, and constructing more widely applicable models that transcend the limits of the case study at hand.

There are also particular narrative elements in this thesis that attempt to paint the picture of Jain practice, emphasise my own situated-ness as a researcher, and foreshadow the leitmotifs of the individual chapters. Starting with *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)*, where excerpts from interviewees' responses have been stitched together to form first-person narratives of four journeys to Leicester, chapters that follow (*Chapters 4–8*) open with narrative snippets taken from my fieldwork experience. These vignettes are typically my own first-person accounts of various mundane (and more extraordinary) events that I experienced during fieldwork and are used to both situate the content that follows and paint a picture of Jain practice that brings the ethnographic data to life in more colourful and vivid ways.

For the ease of understanding the material presented in this thesis and in order to help the reader engage with the entirety of the text, I will at this point provide a short summary of each chapter and highlight how they fit into our exploration of religious change in the Leicester Jain community.

Chapter 2 (Leicester Jains as Diaspora) focuses on setting a theoretical framework to the study and positioning the thesis within the larger body of scholarship on Diaspora Studies. It asks the question of how a particular academic framework changes the way we view a community, or how does our understanding of the Leicester Jain community as a diasporic community impact the way we interpret their religious practice. It answers those questions by surveying the literature on diaspora and religious practice in diaspora more specifically and tries to measure the proposed theories and frameworks against the case study of the

Leicester Jains. The chapter claims that the theoretical stance we assume when examining a community impacts our way of interpreting the data and that the most useful scholarly lens to look at the Leicester Jains is the conceptualisation of the community as a diaspora.

Chapter 3 (*Historical Trajectory*) takes account of the historical patterns of migration that led the majority of the Leicester Jains to settle in this East Midlands city. Following the migratory paths of several generations of Jains from India through East Africa to Leicester, the chapter is concerned with examining how the migratory past influenced the religious present of the community. It does that by highlighting three historical influences on religious change in the Leicester Jain community (the absence of Jain ascetics, a break in the chain of religious transmission, and the change in the religious saturation of the socio-cultural environment) and the resulting intergenerational differences in religious practice. The absence of suitable systems for transmission of religious knowledge engendered (what I call) the ‘sandwich generation’ of thirty-five- to fifty-five-year-olds, who did not have adequate religious education as children and are thus caught between the elders and youth, who are better educated in the beliefs and practices of Jainism.

Chapter 4 (*Intergenerational Innovation*) takes up the theme of generational change within the community and asks how different generations interpret and practice Jainism in Leicester. It contrasts two particular interpretations of Jainism associated with younger and older Leicester Jains. Focusing specifically on the youth (between fifteen and thirty years old), the chapter examines seven characteristics of their way of interpreting and practicing Jainism – the paramount importance of Jain teachings, rationalisation/ethicisation of Jainism, demand for understanding, rejection of traditional rituals and temples, focusing on devotion and introspection, rejecting rigidity in favour of innovation, and pan-Jainism. The youth constructed their interpretation of Jainism in opposition to a more ritual-based and temple-centred Jainism of older Leicester Jains and I interpret this contrast by labelling the two styles of practice as ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ Jainism of the youth and older Jains respectively. After examining the ideal-typical binary of spiritual/religious Jainisms, the chapter delves into an exploration of the role of language, children’s religious education, and geography in the experience of the Leicester Jain youth.

Chapter 5 (*Transforming the Everyday*) takes a look at the small, everyday things that impact religious practice and engender religious change. It has two bigger focal points. The first one is space, in particular the spatial analysis of the Leicester Jain Centre, which is a multi-sectarian temple that combines worship spaces of four branches of Jainism, although implicitly communicating the hierarchy of local Jainism to its visitors. The second node of interest is food. Following one of the most restrictive dietary proscriptions, the Jains are instructed to abstain from meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, all root vegetables, and even certain other foodstuffs like bread, butter, and figs. The chapter examines how the dietary rules are implemented in practice among the Leicester Jains and how abstaining from particular foods is a mark of status and higher religiosity in the community. By examining space and food, the chapter explores how religious practice changes due to everyday (im)practicalities and how there are elements of continuity even within elements of Leicester Jainism that exhibit greater levels of change.

Chapter 6 (*Echoes from India*) transports us to the mid-sized city of Jamnagar in rural Gujarat (India) and juxtaposes the diasporic environment of Leicester with this non-diasporic setting. After introducing the city and its Jain inhabitants, the chapter looks closely at the role of religious sites in Jamnagar and their influence on worship patterns, the links between the presence of ascetics, orthodoxy, and ritual-focused practice of the laity, and the influences of the wider social context on Jain practice – all while remaining in conversation with the Leicester field site. By examining the features of Jainism in Jamnagar and Leicester side by side, the chapter sheds light on the influences of the social, cultural, and religious context on the practice of Jainism in both the diasporic and non-diasporic environments.

Chapter 7 (*Diasporic Reverberations*) endeavours to draw together all the data presented in previous chapters, examine individual social elements affecting religious change, and construct a model of societal influence on religious practice. Presenting first a range of endogenous influences on religious change that are specific to the community under examination (i.e., demographics, the absence of ascetics, and the new role of Minister of Religion), the chapter then explores the exogenous forces shaping the religious practice of Leicester Jains (such as the Leicester environment itself and specific wider social trends), before concluding by

proposing a model of societal influences on religious practice composed of four layers: community, environment, discourse, and society.

Finally, ***Chapter 8 (Conclusion)*** draws the thesis to a close by reflecting on the text as a whole and considers the difficulties of studying change – something unstable, in flux, and always on the move – by looking at a single moment in time.

Leicester Jains as Diaspora

In this chapter we will look at the various theoretical works that situate the thesis into the discussion of migration, religion, and diaspora and put the phrase ‘Jain diaspora’ under the microscope. What is a diaspora? Are all immigrants part of diasporas? What is the role of religion in all of this? What kind of things are we implying when we say ‘religious diaspora’? And is saying ‘Jain diaspora’ useful in any way?

Starting from the very foundations and building towards complexity we will first examine the concept of diaspora. Being a contentious notion that is used copiously yet unreflexively in everyday speech, it has been a battle-ground of contention among academics for the past half-century. After establishing the general lay of the diasporic land, we will bring into our discussion another contentious concept – religion. While the field of Religion and Migration is a relatively new and unestablished one, it has nonetheless produced several insightful theories (based on numerous case studies) and we will look at a select few that focus on the role of religion in migratory experience of individuals, post-migration organisations, and the role of larger social systems in the practice of religion among immigrant communities. After a short discussion of the merits (and perils) of using the term ‘religious diaspora,’ we will return to the subject matter of this thesis that is also the chapter’s starting point – the Leicester Jain community and its designation as a diaspora – and examine its usefulness for our discussion. Overall, I will argue that looking at the Leicester Jains as a diasporic community is the most useful approach for this study and using the term ‘religious diaspora’ in particular enables us to include the effects of migration into our examination of religious change.

The Leicester Jains and Diaspora Studies

As was already mentioned, little is written on Jains that live outside the borders of India and thus the position of the Leicester Jains within the broader field of Diaspora Studies is ambiguous and yet to be established. This thesis aims to be the starting

point for an emerging discussion of Leicester Jainism beyond the confines of Jain Studies and in particular strives to contribute the case study of religious change among the Leicester Jains to the field of Diaspora Studies.

Yet the conceptual contribution is mutual – while I contribute a novel case study to Diaspora Studies, the conceptualisation of ‘diaspora’ informs my examination as well. By employing the language of ‘diaspora’ my study recognises that Leicester Jains are not like Jains living in India, yet they are also not like Anglicans living in Leicester. They are different from both of those groups and marked by their common migration history, their ‘other’ status that sets them apart from the surrounding society (based on ethnicity, language, as well as religion), and they are practicing a religious tradition outside its traditional environments. Utilising the vocabulary of ‘diaspora’ recognises all these elements (and a few more) without imposing an interpretative framework on my analysis, instead opening it up to broader considerations.

Before we delve into an examination of how the definitions and theories of Diaspora Studies serve our interrogation of the Leicester Jains, it should be mentioned that my identification of the Leicester Jain community with the term diaspora is an analytical one – the community itself does not utilise this term and in fact sees it as too technical and unfamiliar to describe their experience. I have not heard Leicester Jains use it when talking to me or amongst themselves, nor have I noticed it in any of the public communication originating from the Leicester Jain Centre. That might be due to three main reasons. *Firstly*, since the Leicester Jain Centre is a religious organisation and the people associated with it are primarily a religious community, they might not want to or need to lay claim to ethnicity, dispersal, or social ‘othering’ that is associated with diaspora identification. Other organisations or groups may utilise the diaspora discourse on their behalf and do so independently of religious identification (e.g., caste, linguistic, or ethnic organisations may be using the concept of diaspora to advocate on behalf of their Jain members). *Secondly*, the Leicester Jains and the Leicester Jain Centre as their representative might not be familiar with the concept and discourse of diaspora and

thus not engage with it.⁴⁰ While still experiencing the attachment to a ‘homeland,’ connections with other co-ethnics and co-religionists elsewhere around the world, and investment into the preservation of a distinct cultural (religious, ethnic) identity – all key features of diaspora – they simply do not use the word ‘diaspora’ to describe their lived experiences. And *lastly*, the lack of diaspora discourse in the Leicester Jain community might also demonstrate an explicit or implicit desire for social integration and belonging on the part of the community itself. Being an outward-looking community that embraced their English environment and did not encourage self-imposed isolationist tendencies, the Leicester Jains might eschew the discourse of diaspora in order not to accentuate their cultural difference and better fit into the broader context of Leicester.

Why then call the Leicester Jains a ‘diaspora’? While we will return to this topic at the closing of the chapter, it is worth pointing out that a useful contribution of examining the Leicester Jain community through the ‘diaspora’ lens is that it helps us draw out the history of migration present in all the Leicester Jain families without employing the language of ‘generations.’ For Jains born and raised in Leicester to be called an immigrant – albeit a second- or third-generation one – perpetuates the ‘othering’ of non-White and non-British groups that is so prevalent in public discourse by transplanting it into academic writing. Navigating around such language while still being able to explore the migration history of such groups and their attachments to real or imagined ‘homelands’ is aided by employing the concept of diaspora.

Although etic and externally imposed, the usage of the conceptual framework of diaspora is particularly useful for the examination of religious change in the Leicester Jain community as it adds additional dimensions to my examination: employing the terminology of diaspora necessitates a consideration of the community’s attitudes towards ‘homeland,’ their transnational connections with India as well as East African countries, and the links they foster with other co-ethnic communities living elsewhere in diaspora. Furthermore, by employing the terminology of diaspora this study remains aware of more than just the religious

⁴⁰ It might also be true that the Leicester Jains were familiar with the concept of diaspora and chose not to use it, because it did not describe their experience, though as far as I am aware that was not the case.

elements of its subject material, but is attuned to ethnic, transnational, and structural realities characterising the experiences of religious communities impacted by migration, which is particularly apt for a multi-sited ethnography like the one presented in this thesis. And lastly, the research question this thesis engages in is one centred around migration – how does Jainism change as a consequence of migration. Foregrounding the element of migration in our discussion is simply at the core of the research presented and highlighting that fact by using diasporic language helps us keep that in mind.

Another question also emerges at the start of my examination of religious change in Jain diaspora – why study religion in diasporic contexts to begin with? Religion changes over time *everywhere*, not only in diaspora, so what do we gain from such a study? Here, I want to draw on Ninian Smart (1987⁴¹) who offered some thoughts on the importance of studying religion in diaspora and identified a handful of themes and trends that researchers would eventually seize upon and explore in more depth. He grouped his answers to the above question into three main points and I would echo his sentiments. *Firstly*, Smart (ibid., 289) claimed that studying religion in diaspora “can provide a clue to patterns of religious transformation” and adaptation of religious communities to their surroundings. If one finds similar developments in different communities, that might signify parallel solutions to parallel problems. In the same vein, such developments might also point to problems in the particular religious tradition, which make its adaptation to a new environment difficult. The transformations of Jainism that we are able to observe in Leicester can thus hint at how other religious communities deal with living in diaspora. Similarly, we can also gain an understanding of the variety of socio-cultural influences on religious communities living in diaspora – elements of Jainism, which change (only) in diaspora, are arguably more dependent on their socio-cultural surroundings than those that do not. Different interpretations of religion in diaspora further highlight the religious elements most prone to external socio-cultural influences (or absence thereof) and identifying such cases provides an insight into the relationship between

⁴¹ The short chapter that appeared in a somewhat overlooked collection titled *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions* (Shaked, Shulman, and Stroumsa 1987) was later reprinted in *The World's Religions* (Smart 1989).

religion and culture not only in the case of Leicester Jains, but for other diasporic communities as well.

Secondly, Smart argued that diasporic religious communities may affect the “home-based” religion – either through financial or social influences – and turn out to be pertinent to the study of religious traditions in the lands of their traditional settlement as well (ibid.). The developments of Jainism in diaspora can thus indirectly influence Indian Jain communities through transnational connections existing between them and specific diasporic communities. Thus an exploration of *diasporic* Jainism is of interest not only to those studying religion in diaspora, but to those studying Jainism in India as well. *Thirdly*, diaspora (and therefore the practice of religion in diasporic communities) is “important because of its great incidence in the modern world” and since “multiethnicity is now commonplace,” the phenomenon of diaspora is worth studying simply because it is a common occurrence in the world we live in (ibid.). Studying Jainism in diaspora is thus essential, if we wish to have a full picture of how modern-day Jainism is practiced around the world, and looking at the Leicester Jains in particular is vital for our understanding of the British religious landscape. To Smart’s three reasons I would also add a *fourth*: migration and life in diaspora accentuate religious change. In India the socio-cultural environment changes gradually and in smaller increments, giving Jainism the time to continuously adapt to an ever-changing society. With migration the change of the cultural environment is sudden and much more extreme, forcing Jainism to adapt to it in a relatively short span of time and in a more extremer manner.

After these preliminary remarks let us now turn to the very notion of ‘diaspora’ itself and see how the Leicester Jains fit into the perimeters drawn for them by the term’s many definitions.

What Is Diaspora?

To look at it from a purely semantic view, diaspora is a derivation from the Greek composite verb ‘*dia-*’ and ‘*speirein*’ meaning to scatter, to spread, or to disperse. It became popular among classical philosophers and Hellenist writers in the 5th century BCE, though it had negative connotations, as it implied dispersion through

decomposition and dissolution. While the modern-day use of the word ‘diaspora’ bears a heavy association with the Jewish people dispersed from an original centre after a series of traumatic events in the 6th century BCE (see Cohen 2008, 1-4, 21-36; Dufoix 2008 [2003], 5-10), the term diaspora was not used by the Jews of the time themselves, as they employed words such as ‘*gôlā*’ (translated into ancient Greek as ‘*aichmalosía*’) and ‘*galût*’ (translated as ‘*metoikesía*’) to designate exile, banishment, and deportation associated with the Babylonian captivity (Baumann 2000, 315-6). In his influential essay *Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison* Martin Baumann (2000) skilfully followed the various layers of meaning attributed to the term diaspora since the 5th century BCE, through the many centuries of its use, and showed how until the 1960s the term was distinctly confined to the Jewish and Christian theological and social traditions.

Before we delve deeper into how diaspora’s meaning has changed and developed over the recent decades, I believe it would be fruitful to first shift our focus to diaspora’s edges and compare the concept with others in its semantic sphere, establishing what diaspora can be defined *against*. For that purpose – and to establish the broader terminology employed in this thesis – we will look at the differentiation between migration (and migrants), transnationalism, and diaspora to accentuate the contours of the term before we look at it more closely.

Diaspora’s Conceptual Family

It is best to start with James Clifford, who provided a useful distinction between immigrants and those living in diaspora by saying that immigrants are people “en route to a whole new home in a new place,” en route to complete integration in their countries of settlement, while people living in diaspora “maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or a dispersed community located elsewhere” and hold on to their sense of identity “defined by collective histories of displacement” (Clifford 1994, 307).

Most definitions of migrants (and migration) are coined for administrative purposes and follow demographic criteria. The most influential of such definitions is undoubtedly the one proposed by the United Nations (1998), which defines a (long-term) migrant as “a person who has moved to a country other than that of his or her

usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence” (ibid., 10). Attempting to transcend the demographic parameters of the UN definition, Harald Kleinschmidt (2003) proposed an alternative and slightly broader conceptualisation of migration, which places less emphasis on contemporary nation-states. He defined migration as “a relocation of residence across a border of recognized significance” (ibid., 17), thus uncovering different borders besides the ones reinforced by nations-states, such as linguistic or cultural boundaries that exist within them.

Focusing more on the context of immigration, Steven Vertovec (2004, 282) defined migration as “transference and reconstitution of cultural patterns and social relations in new setting, one that usually involves the migrants as minorities becoming set apart by 'race', language, cultural traditions, and religion.” Such a definition already implies a physical move of people across borders and into new settings, but highlights other elements that are of vital importance when we discuss migrant experiences. Vertovec further contrasted the definition of migration with the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism and defined *diaspora* as “an imagined connection between a post-migration (including refugee) population and place of origin and with people of similar cultural origins elsewhere.” *Transnationalism*,⁴² on the other hand, is “the actual, ongoing exchanges of information, money, and resources – as well as regular travel and communication – that members of a diaspora may undertake with others in the homeland or elsewhere within the globalized ethnic community” (ibid.). Although these three concepts – migration, transnationalism, diaspora – are in practice more often than not found alongside each other, Vertovec warned against mudding the waters too much and succinctly wrote: “Diasporas arise from some form of migration, but not all migration involves diasporic consciousness; all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism” (ibid.).

⁴² For more on transnationalism see Glick Shiller and Fouron (1999) and Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer (2013).

Superimposing the above discussion on the case study of Leicester Jains, we are able to say that all Leicester Jains are migrants or descendants of migrants⁴³ – they (or their ancestors) have moved from Gujarat, across national and continental borders and boundaries, to settle in Leicester as their adopted home and country of residence. They also regularly engage in transnational activities: visiting relatives in Gujarat every couple of years (as well as traveling to East Africa, although less frequently); calling or messaging friends and family members in India and elsewhere around the world; sending money, charitable donations, and other goods to organisations and individuals in India; and utilising the Jain religious infrastructure for pilgrimages, ascetic visits, and (on an administrative level) acquiring the Jain Centre’s religious specialists. This therefore makes the Leicester Jains immigrants (or their offspring) that engage in transnational activities with other co-ethnics and/or co-religionists in India and around the world.

But what of their designation as ‘diasporic’? For that let us take a closer look at what ‘diaspora’ as an analytic concept means and how it has been defined.

Defining Diaspora

The term ‘diaspora’ has been a contentious term in social scientific scholarship – with its roots in the Jewish experience of persecution and dispersion, it has gradually developed into a concept that covers a broader range of phenomena, although the proponents of such broader conceptualisations encountered challenges from scholars preferring a narrower designation. While the narrow delineation of ‘diaspora’ would evidently not apply to the Leicester Jains (since it limits the applicability of the term to the Jewish – and occasionally Armenian and Greek – diaspora), the broader conceptualisations of the term proves useful to our examination of religious change among the Leicester Jains, as it sheds additional light on the lived experience of Leicester Jains, both in taking account of their past and their present situation.

⁴³ While it is inaccurate to claim that *all* Leicester Jains are migrants (since many have been born in Leicester), all Leicester Jain families have been marked by migration at various points in their history.

First definitions

Until the 1960s the term ‘diaspora’ was confined primarily to the Jewish (and to an extent Christian) theological tradition. The “semantic broadening” (Baumann 2000, 320-1) of diaspora was first undertaken in African studies, where the emergence of interest in the concept of ‘African diaspora’ of late 1950s and mid-1960s was encapsulated in George Shepperson’s work *The African Abroad or the African Diaspora* (1966). With the popularization of the term in African Studies, the diaspora usage received a boost in various other disciplines of social sciences and the humanities – political sciences, anthropology, linguistics, history, and area studies (Baumann 2000, 322). John Armstrong’s article *Mobilized and Proletariat Diasporas* (1976) acted as the definitorial basis for various ensuing studies and definitions. Through the 1980s the usage of the term mushroomed and the broadened, generalised usage of the concept became “institutionalised” (Baumann 2000, 322) with the launching of the journal *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* in 1991, edited ever since by the prominent diaspora scholar Khachig Tölölyan. In his inaugural editorial Tölölyan (1991, 4) touched on the semantic broadening of the term by writing:

We use ‘diaspora’ provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with the larger semantic domain that included words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community.

In addition to Tölölyan’s opening delineation of the general shape of diaspora, the inaugural issue of the journal also included one of the first widely accepted sociological definitions of diaspora, which, despite its attempt to escape the baggage of the archetypal Jewish diaspora, was still heavily influenced by it. With two millennia of connections between the concept and the Jewish people, the Jewish diaspora was seen as the model diaspora in many conceptualisations of the time and tended to set the standard for all other potentially diasporic groups (with only a handful of other groups being able to claim diasporic kinship – namely the Armenian and occasionally the Greek diaspora). In his famous article *Diasporas in Modern*

Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return William Safran (1991, 83-84) defined diaspora as follows.

I suggest [...] that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.

Safran went on to refine his definition by discussing several social groups and their relationship to “the ‘ideal type’ of the Jewish Diaspora [sic.]” (ibid. 84). In his discussion of some groups – for example, sections of the Polish diaspora, the Turks in Germany, the Chinese living in Southeast Asia or the USA, or the Palestinians living in various Arab countries – Safran revealed the looming shadow of the ideal-typical Jewish example most clearly. While Safran’s assertion that “[n]ot all ‘dispersed’ minority populations can legitimately be considered diaspora” (ibid., 86) certainly holds true⁴⁴ his reliance on a single ideal-typical notion of diaspora foreshadows the longer academic struggle to escape the conceptual baggage of the Jewish diaspora in defining the notion as an operational analytic category. The traumatic expatriation, the marginalised immigrant experience, and the desire to return to a real or mythical homeland have remained important elements of many definitions of diaspora and can be traced to Safran’s seminal work (and his later writings on the subject⁴⁵ [see Safran 1999]).

⁴⁴ Safran references the cases of Flemish speaking Belgians who live within French-speaking populations and the Magyars of Romanian Transylvania as examples.

⁴⁵ In his essay *Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay* (1999) – nominally reviewing Robin Cohen’s 1997 book *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* – Safran adopted a very defensive stance regarding his

In relation to the ‘myth of return’ (the fourth element of Safran’s definition), Safran (1991, 91) insisted on its primary importance for diasporic communities, though he acknowledged the fact that a return might sometimes not be feasible.

Some diasporas persist – and their members do not go ‘home’ – because there is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and disruptive, if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora.

For many a return to their homeland is thus a largely eschatological concept, a utopia (or eutopia), used to soften the harsh realities of living in diaspora. Nevertheless, Safran argues that “the myth of return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity when religion can no longer do so, when the cohesiveness of the local community is loosened, and when the family is threatened with disintegration” (ibid., 91).

Side-lining the fact that Leicester Jains do not fit Safran’s idea of a diasporic ideal type (not being Jewish or Armenian), they do fulfil some of Safran’s criteria – although we have to squeeze them into the shape envisaged for them by Safran. While we could say they have been “dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’” (of Gujarat), that dispersion was not on the whole traumatic, but rather opportunistic, and was followed by another dispersion (this time more traumatic) from East Africa. They do retain a collective memory and vision of India, though Leicester Jains have never expressed any significant return tendencies⁴⁶ and on the whole currently do not feel particularly alienated or insulated from the “host society” – though they did experience discrimination in East Africa and were faced with xenophobia upon their arrival in the UK. They are somewhat committed to the maintenance of their homeland, as many (particularly older) Leicester Jains still follow the Indian news and support Indian charities when natural disasters strike the subcontinent, though such a relationship is not as intense as painted by Safran, and the Leicester Jains’ “ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity” are based more on an abstract idea of being of Indian heritage, than linked to their connections with the “homeland.”

own prioritisation of the Jewish diaspora as a singular phenomenon and reinforced his dismissal of the possibility of conceptually expanding the notion.

⁴⁶ A feature typical of ‘twice migrants’ (see Bhachu 1990).

Safran's definition of diaspora therefore does not help us much in better understanding the Leicester Jain experience, though it is also a definition that subsequently faced much criticism and has been amended, reformulated, and at some point substituted for broader and more inclusive conceptualisations of 'diaspora.'

One of such criticisms came three years after Safran published his exposition, when James Clifford addressed some of Safran's points in his article *Diasporas* in the journal *Cultural Anthropology*. Before elaborating on his two case studies⁴⁷ Clifford gave a sober assessment of Safran's reliance on conceptual essentialisation and a centred notion of diaspora. Distancing himself from "imposition of strict meanings and authenticity tests" (Clifford 1994, 304) that he ascribed to Safran, Clifford (*ibid.*, 306) warned that:

...we should be wary of constructing our working definition of a term like diaspora by recourse to an 'ideal type,' with the consequence that groups become identified as more or less diasporic, having only two, or three, or four of the basic six features. Even the 'pure' forms, I've suggested, are ambivalent, even embattled, over basic features.

Clifford continued that over time diasporic communities wax and wane in their diasporism, and that scholars should be able to "recognize the strong entailment of Jewish history on the language of diaspora without making that history a definitive model" (*ibid.*). Instead, they should be taken as "nonnormative starting points" for a phenomenon that is continuously changing and being shaped by new global conditions. Alternatively, Clifford is much more comfortable with a polythetic definition (see Needham 1975) of family resemblance and shared elements "no subset of which is defined as essential to the discourse," thus discarding the need for conceptual boundary policing present in Safran's approach and the conceptual essentialisation of diaspora (Clifford 1994, 306-7). As such, Clifford's approach is much more conducive to our study as it recognises the fact that only a very small subsection of communities that are marked by migration and living 'abroad' can fit

⁴⁷ The two case studies are: (1) the experience of Black Britons and an evaluation of Paul Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987) and *The Black Atlantic* (1993), and (2) the stances of anti-Zionist Judaism in tandem with an analysis and critique of Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin's writings (Boyarin 1992, Boyarin and Boyarin 1993).

Safran's restrictive definition of 'diaspora,' although their experiences are in many ways similar to those of the Jewish and other diasporas.

Another salient point raised by Clifford relates to Safran's first characteristic of a diaspora, that is the dispersal from an original homeland to at least two locations (Safran 1991, 83). In Clifford's view, presupposing a centre of diasporic communities obscures what he calls "the lateral axis of diaspora," which he defines (highlighting the importance of transnationalism) as "decentered, partially overlapping networks of communication, travel, trade, and kinship connect[ing] the several communities of a transnational 'people'" (Clifford 1994, 321-2). Not only are people living in diaspora connected with the place of their (sometimes mythical) origin, but also with other co-ethnics living in other parts of the world and Clifford is concerned "about the extent to which diaspora, defined as dispersal, presuppose[s] a centre" (ibid., 321), at least in Safran's "'centered' diaspora model, oriented by continuous cultural connections to a source and by a teleology of 'return'" (ibid., 306). Focusing too much on a geographical centre and the myth of return to it instead of "a reinvented 'tradition', a 'book', a portable eschatology" (ibid., 321), might devalue the specific transnational interactions among co-ethnics. For the Leicester Jains this point means not only an acknowledgment of their transnational ties (to East Africa as well as other parts of the world, like Belgium or the USA), but also a recognition of their 'twice migrant' status and their complex migration history. While Leicester Jains do identify as ethnically Indian, their ties and ethnic, religious, or other solidarities are not directed exclusively towards the nation and land of India. In Clifford's words: "The empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling *here* assumes a solidarity and connection *there*. But *there* is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation" (ibid., 322). It is definitively not for the Leicester Jain community.

Maturation of the Term

The term 'diaspora' became somewhat fashionable over the late 1980s and into the 1990s, growing ever less monopolised by the Jewish example (Oonk 20017, 16). The academic interest in the topic proliferated in the 1990s and into the 2000s, providing

ever more definitions⁴⁸ and refinements of the concept (see Tölölyan 1994 and 2000), shaping ever more varied listings of chief features and groupings of diasporas into subtypes.

The most detailed expansion of Safran's influential definition of diaspora was provided by Robin Cohen in his book *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (2008 [1997]), the first major general study of diasporas written by a single scholar. In it Cohen saw diaspora as a Wittgensteinian rope (see Needham 1975) and the characteristics comprising its definition as strands within it – the more strands a particular community has, the stronger its characterization as a diasporic community. In his definition, Cohen adopted and remoulded the six strands of the diasporic rope proposed by Safran, forming a set of nine diasporic characteristics (Cohen 2008, 159-68; 1996, 515).

While Cohen largely embraced Safran's earlier definition, his contribution was concentrated in three characteristics (ibid., 17). The second characteristic of his definition ("expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions") allowed for economic, social, and otherwise unforced and less traumatic migration. The eighth point ("a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial") included the relationships among scattered co-ethnic communities (cf. Clifford 1994). And the ninth characteristic ("the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism") acknowledged the major impacts diasporic communities and individuals have on the culture, politics, and creative life of their countries of settlement.

With these additions Cohen's definition is slightly more welcoming of the Leicester Jain case – embracing their complex migration history with many push and pull factors that were not always of traumatic nature (explored further in *Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*), acknowledging their transnational ties and allegiances around the world, and celebrating their contributions to the English society (and that of East Africa beforehand). Cohen's definition thus allows space for more complex cases of

⁴⁸ For some influential definitions of diaspora see Brah (1996), Chaliand and Rageau (1995), Baumann (2000), Butler (2001), and Dufoix (2008 [2003]).

diasporic communities (like the Leicester Jains) and for relationships other than antagonism between the communities at hand and their social environments.

While the above nine characteristics guided Cohen's examination of diaspora, he also developed a typology of ideal types. In addition to the prototypical *victim* diasporas, which can trace their dispersal to a collective traumatic experience (e.g., Jewish, Armenian, and African diasporas), Cohen also included diasporas "generated by emigration in search of work, to further colonial ambitions or in pursuit of trade" (Cohen 2008, 61), shaping three distinct ideal types of diaspora: the *labour* diaspora (e.g., indentured Indians), the *imperial*, settler, or colonial diaspora (e.g., British colonialists), and the *trade* diaspora (e.g., Chinese and Lebanese diasporas – and arguably the Leicester Jains). He added another, more elusive type of diaspora – the *detrterritorialised* diaspora, which he framed as "ethnic groups [which] can be thought of as having lost their conventional territorial reference points, to have become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures" (ibid., 124), which he explored primarily through his focus on the Caribbean peoples and the Sindhis and Parsis living in Mumbai. Although Cohen's definition of diaspora displays the lingering influence of William Safran and the prototypical Jewish model, his exploration of the labour, imperial, trade, and detrterritorialised diasporas followed the broad steps of Diaspora Studies in progressively expanding the term.

A Reflexive Turn

With the proliferation of definitions and the continuous expansion of the concept of diaspora, came a loss of its intellectual sharpness as well as its gradual dilution. Cohen (ibid. 1-2) wrote of the social constructivist critiques of the concept and their eventual consolidation in the field, while Rogers Brubaker (2005, 3) was critical of the literature on the "putative diasporas" – such as white, liberal, queer, digital, Dixie etc. diasporas – which have found their way into the discussions on diaspora. To signal the proliferation of the term's meaning and its conceptual stretching to accommodate various intellectual, cultural, and political agendas, Brubaker coined the term *the 'diaspora' diaspora*, which encapsulated the "dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space" (ibid., 1). Having traced the ways in which the initially narrow meaning of the concept was

dispersed, transformed, and broadened through a lax academic and non-academic use, he then warned (ibid., 3):

If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power – its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.

Preferring a slightly narrower understanding of diaspora, Brubaker was at the same time also wary of ‘groupism,’ which in the diasporic arena of ethnicities, nationalities, and races refers to “the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interest and agency can be attributed” (Brubaker 2002, 164) and where diaspora membership is based on ancestry rather than diasporic features (Brubaker 2005, 11). Instead, he saw diaspora as coalescing around three key features: *dispersion* (either traumatic or not), *orientation to a real or imagined homeland* (though he acknowledged the importance of de-centred, lateral connections between diasporic groups), and *boundary-maintenance* (i.e., the preservation of a distinctive identity – either through self-segregation or social exclusion – in a host society) (ibid., 5-7). These three simple features comfortably apply to the Leicester Jain community – its members have been historically dispersed from Gujarat, continue to be oriented towards India as a place of religious, ethnic, and emotional significance (while also sustaining connections to other geographical locations), and are invested in the maintenance of their distinct ethno-religious identity by (among other things) supporting the Leicester Jain Centre as an organisation.

Taking the above three elements of diaspora as his starting point, Brubaker then proposed (ibid., 12, emphases in original):

...we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim. We should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice, and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis. As a category of practice, ‘diaspora’ is used to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties. [...] It does not so much *describe* the world as seek to *remake* it.

By treating diaspora as an “idiom, practice, project, claim, and stance” (ibid.) Brubaker seeks to disentangle the concept from an *a priori* idea of bounded groups, “de-substantialize” it (ibid., 13), and highlight the processes leading to the formulation of a group through time and different circumstances. While an examination of such ‘idioms, practices, projects, claims, and stances’ in the Leicester Jain community is complicated, as neither the community as a whole nor its individual members use the language of ‘diaspora’ to describe their experience, we can point to a few examples of this ‘category of practice’ among the Leicester Jains. The Leicester Jain community often ‘appeals to loyalties’ directed towards India and other co-ethnics living around the world by, for example, organising pilgrimages to Belgium or India, bringing over Indian religious specialists and musicians, or donating to social causes focusing on India. It also ‘formulates expectations and identities’ by implicitly emphasising the linguistic and ethnic bounded-ness of the community by using Gujarati as the main language of communication within the Centre, wearing traditionally Indian dresses such as *salwar kamiz* and *sari*, or emphasising their Jain identity.

By focusing on the ‘process’ and ‘stance’ of diaspora, Brubaker adopted a “sociologically presentist” stance (Alexander 2017, 1551; Brubaker 2017, 1559). While such a position was necessary for his critique of groupism and his aim of “rescu[ing] diaspora from its proliferating usage and [retaining] its specificity and analytic utility” (Alexander 2017, 1549), it often obscured the historical specificities of diasporic experiences. Revisiting Brubaker’s influential article, Claire Alexander pointed out his one-sided examination of time; while Brubaker was sensitive to the persistence of diasporicity and boundary maintenance across (future) generations, he resisted historical accounts of diasporic groups and did not pay much attention to the historical rootedness of contemporary diasporas. Brubaker responded to the critique by saying: “Alexander is right on target,” (Brubaker 2017, 1559) and admitting that “[a] field limited to the study of diaspora as a project, claim, and stance would be an impoverished field indeed” (ibid., 1560). Through Brubaker’s attention to the processes of diaspora and the consequential re-introduction of its historical rootedness to the academic discourse came an integration of the two sides of the

diasporic coin: “the often deep significance of ‘then’ and ‘there’ in the shaping of subjectivities in the here and now” (ibid.).

The reflexivity in the field of Diaspora Studies was not limited to the interpretation of the concept, but included reflection on the discourse of Diaspora Studies itself. Steven Vertovec (2000) examined the existing literature and analysed the ways in which ‘diaspora’ was utilised in academic writing, proposing a set of three meanings that are ascribed to diaspora; namely “‘diaspora’ as *social form*, ‘diaspora’ as *type of consciousness*, and ‘diaspora’ as *mode of cultural production*” (Vertovec 2000, 142, emphases in original; see Vertovec 1997a, 1997b).

The most common form of understanding diaspora – and the one I am adopting myself – is *diaspora as social form*, in which diaspora is attributed with specific kinds of social relationships, special ties to history and geography, a unique way of life, tensions of political orientations towards homelands and host countries, and transnational economic strategies (Vertovec 2000, 142-6). It is characterised by a ‘triadic relationship’ between “(a) globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups; (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside; and (c) the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears came” (ibid., 144; see Sheffer 1986, Safran 1991). In the understanding of *diaspora as a form of consciousness*, the focus is on “a variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity” (Vertovec 2000, 146), where diaspora is marked by a ‘double consciousness’ and being simultaneously ‘here and there’ (see Gilroy 1987; 1993); an awareness of multi-locality that bridges the gap between different communities (see Cohen 1996); the fractured collective memories that produce a multiplicity of histories, communities, and selves (see Appadurai and Breckenridge 1989); as a source of resistance through engagement with and visibility in public space (see Cohen 1995); and the new self-questioning awareness with regard to culture and religious belief/practice (see Geertz 1968, 61; Parekh 1994, 617). Lastly, *diaspora as a mode of cultural production* is described as “involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena” (Vertovec 2000, 153), influenced by the idea of globalisation and its effects on diasporic groups – on global media and communications, cultural and religious (re)production in diasporic youth,

and the anti-essentialist and constructivist approach to ethnicity, which emphasises fluidity of identities and styles among diasporic people.

In my discussion of the Leicester Jain community Vertovec's first type – diaspora as social form – predominates. While I occasionally engage in discourse on diaspora as a form of consciousness (particularly when discussing transnational connections or Leicester Jains' experiences of India) and diaspora as a mode of cultural production (especially in *Chapter 5 [Transforming the Everyday]*, where I discuss the Leicester Jain Centre as a spatial and material reality of Leicester Jainism), I am primarily interested in the social formations that shape the lives of Leicester Jains. How does the community's migration history affect their religious practice? What are their conceptions of India and England as two distinct locations? What marks their (religious) life as particularly diasporic? These are all questions tied to the conceptualisation of the Leicester Jains as a social form.

Concluding our examination of the term 'diaspora,' let us now reflect on the fit between the above definitions and the Leicester Jain community once more. Following the historical developments of the terminology we were able to observe how the concept of 'diaspora' grew broader in its delineations and closer to encompassing the Leicester Jain community as part of 'diaspora.' By the point of (what I have termed) the reflexive turn, the Leicester Jains were already comfortably tucked into the notion of diaspora, as it gradually loosened the strictness of its criteria for inclusion and embraced more fuzzy cases of diasporic communities.

Thinking back to the delineations between migration, transnationalism, and diaspora discussed above, how can we differentiate between migrants engaging in transnational activities that are part of a diaspora and those that are not? This is where I believe Diaspora Studies scholarship is less clear in its definitions and delineations, relying too much on intangible gradients of attachment, involvement, and commitment to the place of origin to signal the difference between diasporic and non-diasporic migrants maintaining transnational connections. If I claim that Leicester Jains are diasporic in their actions and identities, then what would they need to be doing differently in order not to be characterised as diasporic? The answer is not straightforward. Nevertheless, I would argue that non-diasporic Leicester Jains would – firstly – need to *not* be perceived as 'other' in their society of settlement.

Since their language and particularly ethnicity mark them as different from the hegemonic White English-speaking Britons,⁴⁹ it would be difficult for them to forgo their Indian ethnic identification and thus a level of commitment to the country and people of India. Furthermore, a decrease in the quality and quantity of transnational ties to India would also be necessary, the use of Gujarati as an ethno-regional marker should decline, and involvement in Indian politics, social movements, and day-to-day life should dissipate. Yet none of the above postulations are likely to happen among the Leicester Jains any time soon. It is true that the ethnic diversity and acceptance is prominent in the UK, the intensity of transnational ties and the use of Gujarati are decreasing across the generations, and the individual involvement in India is becoming more superficial. Yet the Leicester Jains maintain a strong religious, social, and ethnic identity, which marks them out as different from the surrounding society and incorporates their history of migration into their experiences of the present. For this reason, as well as the applicability of broader definitions discussed above, I define the Leicester Jain community as a diasporic one and employ the tools of Diaspora Studies in this thesis. And it is to some of these tools that we turn to next, as we examine a handful of theories pertaining to religion as it is practiced in diaspora.

Religion in Diaspora

While I will not rehearse the many definitions of ‘religion,’⁵⁰ it is nevertheless useful to look at how the two concepts of ‘religion’ and ‘diaspora’ can be intertwined and in what ways they speak to each other. Most of the theoretical contributions to the topic of religion in diaspora are buried in individual case studies and are therefore very particular and not always generalizable. As of yet, there have been few comparative and even fewer meta studies that would synthesise the existing data into clearer and more widely applicable theories. A step in that direction is Peter Kivisto’s book *Religion and Immigration* (2014) that seeks to be an introductory go-to for anyone

⁴⁹ Although the ‘othering’ is less acute in Leicester, a city of high ethnic diversity.

⁵⁰ For a flavor of definitional rabbit holes see Bergunder 2014, Greil and Bromley 2003, Indinopulos and Wilson 1998, Platvoet and Molendijk 1999.

looking for an overview of the broader findings of various inquiries into the practice of religion by immigrants settled in diaspora. While it focuses heavily on the North American contexts (or more specifically the USA), it provides valuable insights into Western Europe and the state of “migrant faiths” in countries such as the UK, France, and Germany.

To ease our examination of the topic, the featured theories are grouped into three clusters corresponding to their scope – micro (focusing on individuals), meso (looking at organisational trends), and macro (examining wider, societal topics).

Micro Level: Individuals

Starting with a focus on the smallest element of sociological analysis, we will first examine how migration impacts an individual’s religious engagement. While my study focuses more on the level of community, it is nevertheless individuals that comprise the community and their experience of practicing religion in diaspora nonetheless affects the community as a whole.

One of the first to discuss the migration experience of individuals in relation to their religiosity was Timothy L. Smith, who discussed religious belonging alongside ethnic identity. In his discussion of *Religion and Ethnicity in America*, Smith (1987, 1172) claimed that religion had an “overriding influence” on identity-formation among ethnic groups in the USA, especially for what he termed “White ethnics,” such as Germans, Poles, Hungarians and other European immigrant communities. He attributed this “intensification of the psychic basis of religious commitment” primarily to “the acts of uprooting, migration, and repeated resettlement produced in the minds of new Americans” (ibid., 1174). Indicating that the migration experience was at the root of intensified religious identifications and involvement, Smith postulated that “migration was often a theologizing experience” (ibid., 1175), though never offering a clear definition of the term. Martha Th. Frederiks (2015, 186) provided one by writing: “when migrants grapple with the bewildering experiences of loss, separation and disorientation, faith provides them with a vocabulary to express these experiences and construe meaning, while religious communities offer structure, support and intimacy.” Peter Kivisto (2014, 59) postulated that Smith’s theologizing experience was “more than religious participation, for it also implied a

reflective quality” and that Smith believed that “at least in the past immigrants tended to become more religious than they were in the homeland, and appears to think that their engagement with religion is self-reflective, rather than being the product of habit.” Yet in the end, Kivisto designated “the idea of theologizing experience as being little more than a fancy way of describing heightened religiosity.”

Smith’s idea of migration as theologizing experience and the implicit rise in post-migration religiosity that it brought with it was a popular theory since its publication in 1987 and small-scale studies of immigrant religious communities generally agreed with its conclusions. Yet in recent years several large-scale statistical analyses of immigrants’ religiosity pre- and post-migration showed a picture of decline in religious activity after migration, not growth. In the USA Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund (2006) found that the data from the *New Immigrant Survey* (NIS)⁵¹ conducted in mid-1990s supported “the theory that immigrants who are less integrated into American society are more likely than others to regularly attend religious services” (ibid., 1574), therefore linking the rate of post-migration religious attendance with social integration in the country of settlement. They attributed the prevalence of studies supporting Smith’s theory to their qualitative and congregational bias, writing that small-scale qualitative studies have “the potential to overstate the importance of religion because they lack attention to comparisons between religiously involved immigrants and those who do not attend or are not regularly involved in religious centers” (ibid., 1590).

Studies like mine, which are small-scale, rely on qualitative methods, and find their respondents through religious organisations indeed have an inherent bias towards including only those individuals, who actually participate in religious activities and assign meaning to them. With few avenues of reaching people who are part of the Leicester Jain landscape, yet do not identify as religiously Jain, my ethnography was limited to gathering data primarily from those who regularly came to the Leicester Jain Centre and were invested in its working enough to devote their time and energy to my questions. While I have made sure to include a variety of

⁵¹ For a later study of the same data see Akresh 2011. For a similar study in Canada see Connor 2008, 2009 and in Europe see Diehl and Koenig 2013.

voices in my discussion (including a self-identified ‘secular Jain’ in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*), it should also be kept in mind that my study did not aim to assess the quantitative changes in religious engagement (although I allude to them as well), but was primarily concerned with qualitative differences in religious practice. Yet Cadge and Ecklund’s proposal that the conclusions drawn from small-scale studies need to be read alongside studies based on larger samples that add breadth to the depth provided by qualitative case studies is nevertheless on point.

Working with the same NIS data, Douglas S. Massey and Monica Espinoza Higgins (2011) explicitly addressed Smith’s theory of migration as a theologizing experience. Finding that religious attendance and activity generally dropped post-migrations for most religious traditions they concluded (*ibid.*, 1387):

In contrast to the theologizing hypothesis of Smith, our results are more consistent with what might be called an alienating hypothesis. Although people do not change their religious beliefs when they migrate internationally, they do change their religious behaviors. Settling into a country of destination is necessarily a time-consuming process that involves learning a new language, mastering a strange culture, and working hard to earn money and get ahead economically, activities that necessarily compete with religious practice for the scarce time at immigrants’ disposal.

Furthermore, some immigrants are confronted with an environment “where few share their spiritual beliefs and the faith-based institutional landscape is sparsely populated” (*ibid.*). Religion therefore competes with other demands, which might not leave much time in an immigrant’s life to devote to religious activities – especially if religious infrastructure is not easily accessible.⁵²

While migration is not a theologizing experience for all immigrants (as Smith suggested), neither is it a secularising one (as Massey and Higgins argued). Instead, the importance ascribed to religion by an individual and their level of religious activity are highly dependent on the context that individual finds themselves in and the socio-religious landscape of their new country of residence. Thus while religious identification and level of activity might fluctuate among Leicester Jains – and indeed might have been higher in the first years and decades after their arrival in

⁵² It should also be noted that some migrants (particularly Muslims in Europe) face bigger obstacles for integration – see Alba 2005, and Diehl and Koenig 2013.

Leicester due to community establishment activities – it is necessarily dependent upon the social context in which they find themselves and the events structuring their lives at the time.

Meso Level: Organisations

While some individuals might immigrate into already established structures of worship, others have to build religious systems anew and both have an effect on how religion is practiced in the new environment. Re-examining her postgraduate work with the Hindu communities in Leeds and the nearby Bradford (Knott 1986, 1992), Kim Knott (2009) reflected on the community-formation processes of British Hindu groups and her proposed four-fold process of institutionalisation, (re)traditionalisation, standardisation, and the production of community. The four processes – while ideal types and not necessarily encountered in every case study – outline the general elements present in the formulation of immigrant religious communities and can be useful for examining individual tendencies within groups.

1. *Institutionalisation*. During the first process of community-formation religious groups establish cultural organisations, purchase some sort of property, and develop “a public place of worship for the provision of religious and educational services and in fulfilment of social, spiritual, and civic interests” (ibid., 95). For the Leicester Jains this period occurred in the 1970s and 1980s (as recounted in *Chapter 1*) and is well documented in Banks’s work (1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1994).
2. *(Re)traditionalisation*. Often happening alongside the process of standardisation, (re)traditionalisation typically involves groups seeking to revitalise and authorise themselves with reference to selected religious and ethnic traditions. Interpretations of the immigrant religious tradition that claim doctrinal similarity with other ‘world religions,’ basing it on some authoritative text, or accentuating a single doctrine play a role in the religious self-understanding of the community and are further adopted by the ‘outsider’ visitors to the community (ibid., 96).
3. *Standardisation*. “[S]tandardisation of temple practices and beliefs and their public representation” (ibid., 95) is a particular type of religious

reinterpretation of beliefs, practices, and values that is typically done in service of and concurrently with (re)traditionalisations of the religious tradition. It is a minimisation of differences and an accentuation of similarities, though as well as choosing “to standardise their beliefs and practices to reject the ‘little’ traditions at the expense of their ‘great’ tradition” (Knott 1986, 13), religious individuals and groups can instead opt for “increased traditionalism, new sects, unlikely religious unions, conversion and mission” (Knott 1992, 10). While there is no direct evidence of how the (re)traditionalisation and standardisation phases manifested themselves in the Leicester Jain community, there are clues to their past existence and we will return to Knott’s model in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)* to speculate on the potential consequences of the two processes for Leicester Jainism.

4. *Production of community.* Despite the ethnic, caste, or linguistic distinctions, the Leeds/Bradford Hindus studied by Knott presented themselves as a bounded and unified community and developed shared facilities in the form of temples and community centres in order to establish a space and future for themselves in a new environment (Knott 2009, 102). Similarly, the Leicester Jains are unified by the existence of the Jain Centre and conjoined in their quest to establish a space for themselves as a religious community both on the local and national level.

Another set of Knott’s contributions can be found in her 1986 research paper for the Community Religions Project (see Knott 1991, McLoughlin 2009) in which Knott proposed an elaborate framework for mapping a range of factors that might contribute to “new patterns of religious behaviour, organisation, experience and self-understanding” in countries of settlement (Knott 1986, 10). With this thesis aiming to uncover a similar set of factors influencing religious practice among diasporic communities, it is worth recounting Knott’s list in depth. She identified five factors contributing to religious change:

1. *Home traditions.* The religious and cultural traditions of immigrants interacting with their new environment produce religious changes, which Knott identified in the areas of “new interpretations, new forms of

religion and religiousness, and a new self-consciousness concerning religious matters” (ibid., 11). The nature of these changes stems from the nature of religion itself, as well as the nature of other cultural factors (e.g., language, customs, food, dress, etc.).

2. *Host traditions*. Referring to the complex intertwining of cultural, political, legal, educational, welfare, immigration, and settlement practices encountered in the new environment, ‘host traditions’ encompass the intangible ideas about the place of religion in society, the national character, and the political framework of the country of settlement.
3. *Nature of migration process*. As Knott writes, some immigrants “have come from their original homelands; others from other migration situations. Some have been migrants; others refugees. Some have planned to return; others to stay. The characteristics of the migrant group, and its consequent religious development have been greatly affected by these conditions” (ibid.).
4. *Nature of migrant group*. Necessary for the understanding of community dynamics, characteristics, and the religious change they might influence is the knowledge of the group’s size, geographical dispersion, and group division/cohesion (particularly in relation to the place of origin, history of settlement, kinship, caste, and so on), as they play an important role in religious practice in the context of settlement.
5. *Nature of host response*. In addition to internal (community-specific) influences on religious change, it is important to also keep in mind the general social attitudes influencing the immigrant group, such as attitudes concerning assimilation and integration, racism, and ecumenism (or inter-faith dialogue), since they also play a vital role in formation of immigrant religious practice.

While Knott’s terminology of ‘home’ and ‘host’ traditions, countries, and societies has been abandoned since the publication of her research paper, Knott’s contribution to our discussion remains up to date. After looking at individual examples of religious change within the Leicester Jain community in the

ethnographic chapters of this thesis, we will return to Knott in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*, where the data on religious change will be synthesised in a model not dissimilar to Knott's.

After looking at the four-fold process of community formation and the various influences that affect its practice and change, let us now briefly examine the type of religious organisation that is the Leicester Jain community (or more specifically the 'Jain Samaj [Europe], Leicester'). Peggy Levitt (2004) identified three patterns of transnational religious organisations and the ways in which religious presence in new contexts takes organisational form: *extended*, *negotiated*, and *recreated*. *Extended transnational organisations* are characteristic of major religious traditions that have succeeded in developing global networks of religious institutions (like the Roman Catholic Church), the *negotiated transnational organisations* have a more flexible and decentralised authority structure with much of their initiative coming from the congregational level (e.g., Protestant congregations), and the *recreated transnational organisations* (which I am arguing the Leicester Jains are) represent an attempt to relocate, transplant, or recreate a religious tradition in a new context and replicate the 'homeland' religious beliefs and practices in the country of settlement (Levitt's example are the Gujarati Hindus of Boston). Within the *recreated* type Levitt further identified two broad patterns: (1) some religious organisations are set up as franchise-like groups (or chapters) with heavy guidance from the homeland either in the form of visiting religious leaders, financing, or receiving other resources, while (2) others are non-affiliated or less reliant on a homeland organisation and "simply bring what they need from India to carry out their religious practices" (ibid., 12). While the Leicester Jain Centre fits better into the second category of the recreated transnational organisation – as it is not formally affiliated to any religious organisations in India and instead only utilises their transnational connections to procure religious specialists and ritual paraphernalia from India – there are other groups in Leicester (such as the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission [Dharampur] group), which function more as chapters of a centralised religious organisation with heavy guidance from visiting religious leaders.

As has been repeatedly stressed, the context in which the immigrants find themselves has a big impact on the religious practice and change of the religious

community – and with this next section we look at the widest sphere of the context in which immigrants find themselves and examine how the country of settlement itself might influence the religious practice of its immigrants.

Macro Level: Social Systems

Although my overview of the above theories of religion in diaspora attempted to utilise sources from both North America as well as Europe, the literature of the field in general is predominantly focused on the USA⁵³ – most of the case studies are conducted in the USA and most of the theory draws on American examples. Nancy Foner and Richard Alba (2008) provided a powerful argument for why theories deduced from American case studies should not be generalised to European societies without rigorous examination of their actual applicability. They claimed that religion has very different roles in American and Western European countries and that for immigrants settling into these two contexts, religion has a different function. In the USA religion is seen in a more positive light and functions as a *bridge* towards inclusion (see Hirschman 2004), while in more secular Western Europe religious practice and identification are perceived as a *barrier* towards inclusion. Foner and Alba ascribed this difference to three factors:

1. *Demographic factor*. The religious composition of immigrants to the USA and European countries is markedly different. While the biggest group of immigrants to the USA are Christian (thus conforming to the religious mainstream), the biggest group moving to Europe are Muslim (see Pew Research Centre 2012). Religion (and Islam in particular) in Europe is often construed as a challenge to social integration, a source of conflict with mainstream institutions and practices, and generally viewed as a problem (Foner and Alba 2008, 368).
2. *Cultural factor*. Levels of religiosity are higher in the USA than in Western Europe and to be religious in the USA is to be “in synch with prevailing mainstream American norms” (ibid., 376). According to

⁵³ The imbalance of geographical focus is even starker, if we consider that most of the world’s migration is not from ‘developing’ countries to ‘developed’ countries (e.g., to the USA and Europe), but *between* ‘developing’ countries of the ‘global South’ (see IOM 2013, Koser 2007).

multiple studies “[r]eligion has been analyzed as a socially acceptable form through which U.S. immigrants can articulate, reformulate, and transmit their ethnic culture and identities” (ibid., 363; see Kurien 1998). That is not the case for the majority of Western European countries, where a “secular mindset dominates” (Foner and Alba 2008, 376) and religion is perceived more negatively and with greater unease.

3. *Institutional factor.* The way religion has been institutionalised differs profoundly between the USA and Europe. “As secular as Europeans are, their societies have deeply institutionalized religious identities, which are the result of historic settlements and long-standing practices instituted after centuries of religious conflict,” claim Foner and Alba (ibid., 381). On the other hand, principles of religious freedom and separation of church and state provide a framework for religious pluralism and a multi-religious American nation on the other side of the Atlantic.

These demographic, cultural, and institutional factors influence the role and function of religion for immigrants and paint a very different picture based on where a person is migrating to and what religious tradition they identify with. Individual migration experiences need to be contextualised and broader theories of religion in diaspora should be applied with caution. Recognising the British environment of the Leicester Jain community we should therefore not simply apply theories of religion in diaspora construed from North American case studies, but should instead endeavour to test their applicability for communities living on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Foner and Alba’s work warns from liberally utilising the theoretical toolbox of Diaspora Studies and emphasises the need to examine the social context of the community at hand – which I shall do, particularly in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*.

While so far we have examined theories that look at the role of religion in diasporic communities, we now transition to the other end of the spectrum to a theory that incorporates the experience of migration into its conception of religion. Basing his understanding of religion on extensive research among the Cuban population in Florida (USA), Thomas Tweed (1997, 2006) integrated the experience of diasporic practice of religion into a theory of religion in his monograph *Crossing*

and Dwelling (2006). In it Tweed offered the following definition: “Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries” (ibid., 54).

The spatial metaphors in the last part of Tweed’s definition – making homes and crossing boundaries – emphasise Tweed’s argument that religion is employed by individuals and communities as a means of orientation in time and space (ibid., 74). The phrase ‘make homes’ is “shorthand for saying that religions situate followers in the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos,” (ibid., 76) thus in other words, “involve homemaking. [...] They delineate domestic and public space and construct collective identity” (ibid., 75). In Tweed’s opinion religions play an active role in the construction of social identity as well as social norms, values, and codes. They not only represent a ‘home away from home’ in diaspora (see Warner 1993), but are actively drawn upon in a variety of non-diasporic situations to regulate the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos, and help individuals orient themselves in the geographical and social spaces they find themselves in. On the other hand – Tweed claims – religions also ‘cross boundaries.’ This involves three kinds of crossing: terrestrial, corporeal, and cosmic. Religions not only ease such crossings, but also bring them into being by building cosmological models, setting social boundaries, and controlling bodies and bodily actions of their followers. In Tweed’s understanding, the crossing of boundaries also signals another aspect of religion – its relationality. As Tweed claims, religious traditions are best understood in contexts of relations and as processes, flows of confluences, and movements of people and ideas.

Based on Tweed’s conceptualisation of religion we can therefore speculate that Jainism for Leicester Jains is also a means of ‘making homes and crossing boundaries.’ It constructs collective identity based on a shared religious tradition, constructs social norms and regulates the body (through, for example, dietary regulation explored in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*), eases the crossing of national, linguistic, and emotional boundaries, while also erecting social boundaries between Jains and non-Jains. Furthermore, it was through the Leicester Jain Centre that the individuals now identified as Leicester Jains found ways of expressing themselves as a religious community and ‘made home’ in Leicester, and it was

through being a religious community that they ‘crossed the boundary’ of obscurity in Leicester and became recognised as part of the city’s religious landscape. Leicester Jainism is also an example of religion’s relationality emphasised by Tweed: the grouping of ideas and practices known as Jainism was brought to England with the movement of people across time and continents; the flows of traditional practice and new social influences met in a confluence among the walls of the Leicester Jain Centre; and Leicester Jainism is engaged in a continuous process of change and innovation (examples of which are presented in this thesis).

Having travelled full-circle, we find ourselves again looking at the individual, their religious views, and how religion might help with the transition of migration. Yet we have also travelled across theoretical considerations ever closer to religion – from dry discussions of semantic origins of the term ‘diaspora’ to a definition of ‘religion’ based on diasporic experience. As the final stop on our theoretical journey, let us consider one last concept: that of ‘religious diaspora’.

‘Religious’ Diaspora?

Although when discussing religion in diaspora the concept of a *religious* diaspora might be the easiest to jump to, it is in fact a notion fraught with difficulties and often a contested one. That is primarily due to the strong connection between the understanding of diaspora and geography, and the often transnational character of religion (see Vertovec 2004, 280-1).

In the seminal work we already touched upon, *Global Diasporas*, Robin Cohen (2008, 152-4) rejected the possibility of a ‘religious’ diaspora on the grounds of the commonly close relationship between ethnicity and religion. Cohen warns of the overlap between ethnicity and religion often present in diasporic communities and the difficulty of untangling that relationship when describing either religion or ethnicity of that community, which can in some cases be so closely imbricated as to become inseparable. Think of Irish and Italian Catholicism, Punjabi Sikhism, and the paradigmatic Judaism of the Jews; in many of those cases, Cohen claims, “it is difficult to decide whether one is describing a faith or an ethnicity” (ibid., 153). He further cautions his readers against ignoring the (many) secular or non-religious members of a ‘religious’ diaspora and against conflating minority faiths with bigger

traditions – Cohen gives the example of ‘the Indian diaspora,’ where many smaller traditions are subsumed under the umbrella of Hinduism and thus designated as ‘Hindu diaspora.’ Lastly, Cohen warns against burying various ethnicities and nationalities under an umbrella of a single ‘religious’ diaspora. Talking, for example, about a ‘Muslim diaspora’ buries many ethnicities and nationalities – such as Turks, Bosnians, Pakistanis, Somalis, and Indonesians to name just a few – within a supposedly single ‘diaspora religion,’ while they share little more than an artificial designation. Different languages, cultural traditions, and even branches of a religious tradition are absorbed into a single term and neglected for the sake of an analytic category.

Steven Vertovec (2005, 281) agrees with Cohen’s last point and states that the term diaspora gets broadened too much if we talk about phenomena such as the ‘Muslim diaspora’ or the ‘Catholic diaspora.’ Nevertheless, in his introductory chapter to *The Hindu Diaspora* (2000, 2-4) Vertovec argued that Hindus living outside of India can still be viewed as a ‘religious’ diaspora, being “a kind of special case akin to Judaism and Sikhism” (ibid., 2). He supported his claim with a two-fold explanation. Firstly, Hinduism (unlike religious traditions such as Christianity and Islam) is generally not a proselytising religion and does not seek converts from outside India. This leads us into Vertovec’s second and arguably more important point, that Hindus generally do not engage in proselytising due to the rootedness of the religion in the social system and the land of India. Agreeing with Bikhu Parekh (1993, 1994), Vertovec claims there is “an acute sense of rootedness characterizing the relationship between Hinduism and India” (Vertovec 2000, 3), which is strong enough to justify calling Hinduism ‘an ethnic religion.’ In the case of Hinduism then, religion and ethnicity become so intertwined that it becomes pointless to study them separately, making Cohen’s concern about the difficulty of their untangling obsolete. Thus Vertovec felt comfortable enough to not only use the term ‘Hindu diaspora’ in his work, but actually use it as the title for one of his most well-known books (Vertovec 2000).

Another scholar comfortable with the idea of a ‘religious’ diaspora – or what he terms ‘diaspora religion’ – was John R. Hinnells. In his introduction to the second part of *A New Handbook of Living Religions (Part II: Cross-Cultural Issues)* (1996)

Hinnells defines a 'diaspora religion' as "a religion practiced by a minority group, conscious of living in a culturally and religiously different, possibly hostile, environment, away from the old country of the religion." He utilised the term as a preferred alternative to the vocabulary of migrants and migration, both in relation to individuals and religious traditions. He wrote (ibid.):

In the four countries under discussion [Australia, Britain, Canada, and the USA] there are important, substantial and obviously increasing numbers of second- and third-generation South Asians. They clearly are not migrants. Equally, their religion, Hinduism, Islam or whatever it may be, is not in migration. It is now part of the respective national scenes.

In order to bypass seeing, for example, third-generation Muslims of Pakistani descent born and raised in the UK as 'migrants' and practicing a religious traditions that could in any way be conceived as 'newly arrived' in the UK, Hinnells suggests using the term 'diaspora religion' as a convenient term for thinking about such groups, though he acknowledges that it is not one without difficulties. That is true. While his efforts of transcending the 'othering' of such religious and/or ethnic minorities in academic discourse are commendable, Hinnells did not provide a strong defence of his preferred terminology and struggled to establish what exactly he meant by "the old country of religion." He claimed that while Christianity and Islam could be conceived as 'diaspora religions' (due to their geographic expansiveness from a single locality in the Middle East), they should not be characterised as such, since Christian and Muslim groups living elsewhere (e.g., in the UK or Pakistan respectively) have become "so indiginized [...] that they do not really have a sense of living away from the country of the religion." Instead, the 'Holy Land' or Mecca are nothing more than places of pilgrimage and not centres of their religion, as "India is for Hindus or Jains, or Punjab is for Sikhs" (ibid.). Hinnells emphasised the importance of 'diaspora religion' being "a minority phenomenon," yet glossed over examples such as Muslims in India. Muslim groups, commonly ostracised in contemporary India, could be seen as a "minority group, conscious of living in a culturally and religiously different, possibly hostile, environment, away from the old country of the religion," such as Pakistan – which is Hinnells's definition of 'diaspora religion.' What is 'the old country of religion' then? It appears Hinnells

simply renamed Safran's (1991) notion of 'homeland' in an attempt to divorce his conception of 'diaspora religion' from ethnicity, thus casting a broader net on the myriad of phenomena linking religion and diaspora.

I would further argue that Hinnells's phrase 'diaspora religion' gives too prominent a place to religion, as it puts it in the position of a noun, leaving 'diaspora' as a simple adjective, a qualifier that signals the particular variety of the phenomenon called religion. This provides 'religion' with a degree of agency, and answers the question 'what kind of religion' instead of 'what kind of diaspora.' Thus it falls into the trap criticised by both Cohen and Vertovec, in that it subsumes large and incredibly diverse groups of people under an umbrella term of a 'diaspora religion' to an even greater extent than the term 'religious diaspora.' To push it even further, Hinnells's definition of a 'diaspora religion' does not necessarily refer only to diasporic groups – according to his definition European ISKCON followers, Californians involved in Hellenic pagan reconstruction practices, the Amish community in North-eastern USA, and Muslim groups living in India could be interpreted as 'diasporic religions,' though the individuals might not have migrated and the communities not see themselves as living in diaspora.

Hinnells's terminology thus misleadingly shifts the focus of scholarly attention from the movement and actions of people to the movement and actions of religion, and over-privileges the religious affiliation of a diasporic community. The term 'religious diaspora,' on the other hand, primarily focuses on the movement of people and looks at religion as just an aspect of a diasporic community, not its centre. It captures a composite of various diasporic communities connected by adhering to a common religious tradition and positions the religious affiliation of a community as only one of its aspects, not its defining feature.

While the nomenclature of a 'religious diaspora' is not without its problems (as pointed out above), it is nevertheless one that is the most appropriate for the project at hand. Although the term explicitly focuses on the religious aspect of a diasporic community, it does not ignore the interplay between religion and ethnicity either. Due to its centeredness on geography, the term 'diaspora' already implicitly includes the concept of ethnicity (see Rai and Sankaran 2011, 6) and therefore the term 'religious diaspora' encompasses both a religious as well as an ethnic dimension of

the community at hand. Employing this terminology acknowledges the importance of ethnicity, but shifts the focus from ethnic identity to the religious practice as the object of study. ‘Religious diaspora’ is therefore a useful shorthand term convenient especially when we are interested in the religious aspect of a diasporic community, though we must recognize it is just that, an aspect of a community, not its defining feature.⁵⁴

The use of the term ‘Jain diaspora’ in this thesis therefore declares my focus on the religious practices of Leicester Jains, but incorporates their ethnic identification as an important aspect of those practices. Similarly to Vertovec (2000, 2-4) and his conceptualisation of Hindu diaspora, we can justify the use of the term ‘Jain diaspora’ with almost identical arguments to Vertovec’s, as Jainism is not a proselytizing religion and is very much rooted in the social system and land of India (as well as tied to the Jain ascetics, who typically do not leave the Indian subcontinent). Furthermore, Jainism is an even smaller religion than Hinduism, confined only to certain areas of India, and rather unknown outside South Asia. I therefore employ the term ‘Jain diaspora’ as referring to a subset of the South Asian diaspora that includes people of Indian heritage living in diaspora, who identify with the Jain religious tradition. Such a definition acknowledges the importance of ethnicity of the community being studied, but shifts the focus from ethnicity to the religious tradition, which is the object of the study at hand.

Conclusion: The Value of a Diasporic Lens

In the introduction I asked the question: why call the Leicester Jains a diaspora? While I gave a handful of reasons in the chapter’s opening, I want to address the question again in its closing, after having looked at the convoluted path ‘diaspora’ has taken over the past half-century and the way it has been conceptualised alongside religion in contemporary scholarship.

⁵⁴ It should be emphasised that the adjective ‘religious’ does not function in the same way as in the term ‘economic diaspora.’ In the case of religious diaspora, religion is mostly not the driving force behind individuals’ reasons to migrate, as it is in the case of an ‘economic diaspora.’ It is solely a descriptor of a group of people living in diaspora, who migrated for a variety of reasons, but adhere to the same religious tradition.

While the theoretical stance employed by the researcher impacts the interpretation of the gathered data, the conceptualisation of the Leicester Jains as a diasporic community is the most useful scholarly lens for approaching the topic of religious change in the Leicester Jain community. My argument for it centres around four nodes. *Firstly*, utilising the language of ‘diaspora’ recognises the importance of history (and particularly migration history) that continues to have an effect across generations and in the present moment as well. It also acknowledges the fact that Leicester Jains are not new immigrants (and that many of them are not themselves immigrants at all) and that they have had time to establish a religious community in a new environment, which is different in characteristics from a community of newly immigrated people. *Secondly*, the framework of ‘diaspora’ enables this study to take seriously the changes in the socio-cultural environment and the impact of (especially new) social forces on the practice of Jainism. The ‘diaspora’ framework in fact prioritises our consideration of the Leicester Jains’ socio-cultural environment as a vital part of our examination by recognising that Jainism as it is practiced in Leicester is not the same as Jainism practiced in India and that it will be modified, adapted, and impacted under the influence of its new environment. *Thirdly*, designating the Leicester Jains as a diasporic community emphasises that they are connected by more than just religion – their history of migration, experience of living in diaspora, shared language, ethnicity, and so on – and opens up our examination to other layers of their experience (such as transnational links with India and elsewhere) as well as remaining aware of the structural realities that may impact individuals and communities affected by migration. And *fourthly*, the ‘diasporic’ vocabulary acknowledges that the group under question is in some ways (linguistic, ethnic, religious, etc.) different from the society surrounding it, but does not perpetuate the ‘othering’ present in the language of ‘immigrant generations’ (e.g., by calling some of the Leicester Jains ‘second-’ or ‘third-generation’ immigrants).

In essence, utilising the language of ‘diaspora’ recognises and incorporates all of the mentioned elements, but does not impose any particular interpretative framework on my study. While not all theories of religion in diaspora apply to the Leicester Jain community, the Diaspora Studies toolbox nevertheless represents a useful foundation from which one can build the portrait of a particular diasporic community by adding

to it the richness of ethnographic data and in turn expanding the theoretical models used. It is now time to step away from those theoretical models and delve into the richness of practice. In a way, the above examination presents only a theoretical jumping off point, providing direction for our dive into the ethnographical pool of Leicester Jainism.

Chapter 3

Historical Trajectory

The Historical Formation of Generations

Having looked at the rationale behind describing the Leicester Jains as a diasporic community, we now turn to examining a particular aspect of that framework and its effects on the practice of Jainism in Leicester – the migration history of the people constituting the Leicester Jain community. Following the migratory paths of several generations of Jains moving from Gujarat through East Africa to Leicester, we will examine the historical patterns of migration that were introduced in *Chapter 1* and look at the effects of migratory past on the religious present of the Leicester Jains.

While it is impossible to account for the entire migration history of *all* individuals who comprise the Leicester Jain community, there are certain similarities between the migratory paths taken by the majority of the community that allow us to draw broader trends and explore their effects on the Leicester Jain community as it exists today, especially in relation to their religious practice. Although migratory paths are rarely unidirectional or simple and many individuals have taken windy routes to reach the point of settling in Leicester, the majority of the Leicester Jains would point to Gujarat, East Africa, and Leicester as the major junctions on their personal maps of migration. Even if they themselves have not traversed the complex paths of intercontinental migration and have been born in Leicester, the migratory history of their parents or grandparents permeates their air and influences their lives. Thus in order to better understand the present state of Jainism in Leicester, we need to explore its history first.

This chapter will first recount the migration history of the Leicester Jains by focusing on three nodes in their journey – Gujarat, East African countries, and the new homes they established in the UK and elsewhere around the world. After obtaining a thorough understanding of their course of migration, we will look at the migration's effects on the religious practice of the Leicester Jain community in the present. In particular, we will focus on the gradual unravelling of Jain religiosity, knowledge, and practice, either due to the absence of Jain ascetics, the loss of

structures of religious transmission, or the general reduction in the religious saturation of their environment.

The historical layering of influences on Jain practice will then bring us to an examination of three distinct generational groups in the Leicester Jain community, formed as a consequence of Leicester Jains' migration history. The lack of religious transmission structures in East Africa and the early stages of community formation in Leicester left the middle ('parent') generation with a weaker understanding of Jainism, while the older Leicester Jains (the 'grandparent' generation) gained religious knowledge later in life, and the Leicester Jain youth (the 'children' generation) have benefitted from the religious knowledge transmitted through a reformed system of children's religious education. Thus the Leicester Jain community is characterised by a generational split, which does not follow the conventional lines of younger *vis-à-vis* older generations, but counterposes the middle generation with the more religiously informed older *and* younger Leicester Jains. The aim of this chapter is therefore to not only show how the three generations are differentiated based on their religious practice and engagement today, but to draw on the migration history of the Leicester Jains to offer an explanation for their emergence, and by doing so demonstrate the continued influence of the migratory past on the religious present of the Leicester Jain community. While this thesis is based on a study into the *present* state of religious practice among the Leicester Jains, it is important to acknowledge the influence of the *past* as well, as it continues to affect the religious practice of the Leicester Jains today and will continue to do so in the future.

Migration History

Setting Sail: Out of the Land of the Forefathers

As already mentioned in *Chapter 1*, the vast majority of Leicester Jains are of Gujarati origin (based on my fieldwork estimates, the number is in the vicinity of 98%), though some 75-80% (Banks 1991a, 242; supported by my fieldwork data) have come to Leicester after a period spent in the countries of East Africa – either

Kenya, Uganda, or Tanzania – or are descendants of these ‘twice migrants,’⁵⁵ who arrived in Leicester via East Africa. Many of the Gujarati Leicester Jains trace their origin to the region around the city of Jamnagar, on the west edge of the Saurashtran peninsula.

While the South Asian presence in East Africa spans to at least the times of Ancient Greece, it has historically been limited to the coast and its ports, where South Asians (mainly Muslims and Hindus) established trading communities that kept to themselves and did not mix with the local populations (Twaddle 1990, 152). With the arrival of a common coloniser in the form of the British Empire, the migration from the Indian subcontinent to East Africa grew steadily towards the end of the 19th century, either due to indentured labour arrangements⁵⁶ or voluntary economic migration, reaching its crescendo in the first half of the 20th century (especially between the world wars).

According to Tinker (1975) indentured labourers typically came from present-day Pakistan, representing various religious and social (*jati*) groups, and generally returned to British India after a fixed period of time. Conversely, economic migrants tended to come from Gujarat and Punjab, representing mostly Hindu trading groups, and strived to establish themselves permanently in East Africa. While exact numbers of economic migrants are difficult to verify, Banks (1992, 128; citing Harris in Ghai and Ghai 1971) writes that by the late 1960s Kenya was home to approximately 182,000 South Asians, Tanzania to 105,000, and Uganda to 80,000. It is unlikely that any of the ‘twice migrant’ South Asians living in Leicester today are descendants of indentured labourers. They are instead the descendants of these groups of migrants, who arrived to East Africa in the spirit of commercial enterprise and social advancement (Banks 1992, 127). Out of the combined 367,000 South Asians living in East Africa in the mid-20th century, about half were British passport holders, a

⁵⁵ ‘Twice migrants’ is a term typically used for people of South Asian origin who have migrated to the UK from countries other than those in South Asia and are generally descendants of South Asians, who settled in British colonies (e.g., East Africa). Parminder Bhachu (1985; 1990) is credited with the coining of the term in her monograph *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (1985).

⁵⁶ Indentured labour or servitude was a system of bonded labour instituted in British India in order to transport Indian labourers to other British colonies (for physical work on sugar plantations, railroads, etc.) after the abolition of slavery in 1833. Workers signed contracts obliging them to work for a particular employer for a fixed period of time in which they repaid their passage from India and accumulated a capital sum (see Lal 1998).

factor which played an important role after the end of the colonial rule (Twaddle 1990, 157).

The first Jains to immigrate to East Africa settled in Mombasa (modern-day Kenya) in 1899. The Jain presence in East Africa grew steadily after that and Prakash C. Jain (2011, 88) estimated that during the 1930s there were about 2,000 Jains in East Africa – “about 1,000 in Nairobi, 500 in Mombasa, 100 in Dar-es-Salaam, and the rest elsewhere.” In the 1940s the total estimate of Jains living in East African territories grew to 7,400 and by 1963 that number shot up to 32,000 according to Sneh Shah (S. Shah 1977, 372; see P. C. Jain 2011, 89): 25,000 Jains are said to have lived in Kenya, under 2,000 in modern-day Tanzania, and a small group of Jains in Uganda. Most of these Jains came from Gujarat (particularly Saurashtra and Kutch) and Maharashtra and tended to identify as Shwetambar Jains.

For the Gujaratis of the Saurashtran peninsula two factors are commonly identified as having contributed towards their migration to the British colonies and protectorates of East Africa. A major drought at the turn of the 20th century (1899-1901), which resulted in crop failure and a major famine in the Saurashtran region, and the British demand for skilled clerical labour and mercantile development in East Africa, which worked in tandem as instrumental push and pull factors of migration (Banks 1994a, 235; 2000, 193). Yet most of Banks’s (1992, 129) and my informants reported chiefly of economic opportunity and chain migration through successfully established relatives as being the major reasons for their families’ move to East Africa. Ishitaben’s migration story⁵⁷ of her family moving to East Africa and her ending up in Leicester is an example of such an entrepreneurial decision.

Ishitaben’s story

I was born in Africa – in Kenya, Nairobi. I'm the second child. So yeah, two brothers, two sisters. My father's eldest brother – he came to Kenya many, many years ago for business. You know, just emigrating and people say that

⁵⁷ The migration stories featured in this chapter are abridged versions of my informants’ (often lengthy) migration narratives. While I have taken the liberty of shortening their responses and infrequently rearranging specific sentences to maintain the flow of the narrative, I have not altered any substantive details or subtracted anything that would result in a misrepresentation of their stories.

“you come here, you can make your future,” so he came here. They didn't have any kids, so him and his wife came to Africa and he was a very, very good businessman and he set up his own business and he became very, very rich, really earn good money, and he started calling his brothers to sort of join him, so that's how my dad came. That was years and years ago. And they had motor-spare parts business so my dad and his elder brother they both ran a shop in Nairobi, which is capital of Kenya, selling motor-spare parts.

I did all my education back home [in Kenya]. I did until GCSE O-levels – that was common. The studies down there, lower studies were fine, but after that, parents normally used to send their kids either to India or UK for studies. I was quite good and I was quite ambitious and all that, so my parents sent me to India to study. Then my sister got married and then she came to UK after the wedding. I went to India for a year, but somehow I just didn't settle there, found it too different – the culture – and missed my family and all that. And then my sister came here so my dad decided to send me here, so at least I had a sister here. So that's why I came here and then I did my further education here, in London. And once I [finished] studies I went back home and I started a job there, but then when a girl becomes twenty-two years, twenty-three, the father wants to marry her off – that's the tradition, because ours was an arranged marriage. So I came back here and then got introduced to my husband and then we met, so I got married and then settled here. So initially I came here to study, then I went back for a couple of years and then came here. And then got married and settled here in Leicester.

Complicating the simple narrative of push and pull factors, Ishitaben's story highlights the fact that most families prioritised a range of factors (like economic advancement) when deciding to emigrate to East Africa and most of them followed the chain migration patterns of settling with their already established friends and relatives upon arrival. A consequence of such a chain migration in this particular

case was that Gujarati settlement in East Africa became to a certain extent organised along *jati* lines, as was already touched upon in the discussion of *jati* in *Chapter 1*. Due to chain migration of both Shrimali and Oswal Jains, the settlement patterns of Jains in the British colonies and protectorates of East Africa reflected their *jati* affiliation: the Oswals tended to confine themselves to Kenya, while the Shrimalis settled in all the three countries – Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (Banks 1992, 132).

Banks (1994, 237) attributed this discrepancy between Shrimali and Oswal settlement patterns to their chosen professions once in East Africa. Upon arrival most Oswals moved into trading and mercantile activities, while the majority of Shrimalis reportedly entered government service due to putting a higher premium on acquiring literacy and managerial skills. Their service led Shrimalis to become more spatially scattered than their Oswal counterparts, as they tended to take up governmental opportunities throughout East Africa. As a result of different settlement locales and a slight animosity brought over from Gujarat, the two *jatis* did not constitute a single social and/or religious group while in East Africa (nor do they strongly affiliate in Leicester today), but instead stayed separate, the Shrimalis helping with the recreation of the *Navnat*,⁵⁸ while the Oswals were numerous and concentrated enough in Kenya to function as a *jati* on their own.

In colonial East Africa South Asians as a whole occupied the intermediary position between the ruling Britons and the indigenous African population in a distinctive local 'racial hierarchy' (forming a "middleman minority" [P. C. Jain 2011, 89]), which left the East African South Asians with many territorial and political rights being denied to them (Maharaj 2008, 26-7; Twaddle 1990, 155-6; Keshavjee 2012, 15). Their insistence on equality with the White East African population led to a severe curtailment of South Asians' trading rights outside major townships throughout British East Africa in the 1930s, and an end to unrestricted immigration from the Indian subcontinent to British East Africa in the 1940s. Although some (especially skilled) South Asians were still allowed to immigrate, these restrictions stopped the movement of South Asians into the East African interior and turned

⁵⁸ *Navnāt* (lit. nine *nāts*) is a federation of *jatis* ('*nats*') traditionally of *vania* (mercantile) groups brought together for business (and occasionally marriage) purposes. Originally brought over from Gujarat, it was established in colonial East Africa with a similar equivalent existing in England as well (called the 'National Vanik Association') (Banks 1992, 54-8; 1994, 237).

South Asians even more visibly into an urban racial minority (Twaddle 1990, 157; Ramji 2006, 714-5).

Even in Kenya, where the South Asian community was much more substantial than anywhere else in East and Central Africa, South Asians accounted for no more than 2% of the total population (Bennett in Twaddle 1990, 159; Ramji 2006, 714; Aiyar 2009, 2011). Nevertheless, anti-Indian sentiments were palpable and Furedi (1974) argued that such hostility and additional discrimination originated primarily in the resentment of African traders for the earlier hindrances caused by the South Asian predominance in East African trade. This resentment led to many African traders trying to “compensate for their economic weakness by exerting [their] political muscle” (Furedi in Twaddle 1990, 158). After the end of the colonial rule, the urban status of East African South Asians and profound anti-Indian sentiments among the Black East Africans left South Asian communities politically vulnerable, putting many South Asians in a precarious position (Twaddle 1990, 157).

On the Move: From East Africa to Leicester

Uganda was the first East African country to attain independence from Britain in October 1962, followed by Kenya’s independence in December 1963, and the establishment of a newly merged Tanzania in April 1964.⁵⁹ Soon after their establishment, the East African countries started to pursue Africanisation policies, which were distinctly Indophobic in character and aimed to restrict the access of East African South Asians to trade, wealth, and power. Various subtle and overt discriminatory practices reached their peak with the Ugandan expulsion, which left thousands of Ugandan South Asians in a difficult financial situation and in desperate search for a home.

On 4th August 1972 Idi Amin, a Ugandan post-colonial dictator, expelled all persons of South Asian descent (over 75,000 people [Keshavjee 2012, 16; Herbert 2012, 300]) out of Uganda. As is commonly described, “following what is popularly portrayed as a dream he had had in which God asked him to expel the Indians from the country, [Amin] passed an edict giving all the non-citizen Asians in Uganda 90

⁵⁹ Tanganyika declared independence in December 1961, and Zanzibar and Pemba in December 1963 before merging in 1964.

days in which to leave the country,” and shortly afterwards “announced that all Asians – citizens and non-citizens alike – would have to leave” (Twaddle in Keshavjee 2012, 16). Although we do not know how many of the 75,000 Indians expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin were Jains, we can assume they followed the broader patterns of relocation from East Africa and migrated mostly to the UK, USA, Canada, India, and Australia.

Although other East African countries did not take such severe measures against their South Asian populations, South Asians nevertheless suffered discrimination and persecution. Several African leaders, under the Africanization policies, subjected their South Asian populations to “restrictive laws and practices in relation to trade licensing, foreign exchange, work permits and rights of residence, all against a general atmosphere of hostility towards them” (R. Shah 2012, 9) that began a steady outflow of South Asians from East Africa in what became known as ‘the Exodus’ (R. Shah 2012, 9; Ramji 2006, 714). As a consequence of the Ugandan expulsion alone, Britain admitted 27,000 British South Asians (those holding British passports), who primarily settled in London and Leicester, while many more arrived to the UK from other East African countries as well (Twaddle in Herbert 2012, 300).

Prafulbhai’s story below again complicates the simple picture of migration that is encapsulated in the portrayal of South Asians fleeing persecution by East African governments. It adds a layer of agency to individuals like Prafulbhai, who were not only subject to the legislative whims of East African and British governments, but navigated their own routes to make their way to Leicester.

Prafulbhai’s story

I come from Kenya. There were Jain temples in Mombasa, which is on the coast, then there was a temple I think in Nairobi, which is the capital, but the town from where I come, there were no temples. Then again, there was a small shrine, where there're *murtis* and my parents, they used to go over there. And we were kids, so didn't know much about it. And in Africa religion was very lenient, you know. So it is not that parents used to follow strictly and they used to make children follow strictly – you know, it wasn't

like that. So in my town there was no Jain temple. There is now, there's one now, but not at that time.

After Kenya got independence they had brought out the law of Africanisation that means that those who are the citizens of Kenya, they are the only ones can work. The non-citizens will need a working permit and those working permits – there was no guarantee that... whatever the fee you pay, that... there was no stipulation of time. You would only know after you've received your permit, you know. So people started thinking, that “if I'm going to pay so much money, which obviously will be paid by my employer, but it will be deducted from my wages, so at the end of the day, if I pay so much money and if I don't get enough time to work and recover, than what is the point?” You know. And that's one of the things that people were really upset about.

And on the other side what happened was, that here in Britain they brought out a law saying that people, who want to come to Britain – was British citizens, but want to come to Britain – they will need a voucher for settlement. They will be interviewed in Kenya, Nairobi, and then once they're interviewed, then they'll be given a voucher and then they can come and settle here. So the date was – I think it was 1st of March 1968. So before the 28th of February, you're gonna buy your ticket and land here and no questions asked. Everything was straightforward. But after that, you need a voucher. In Kenya there was Africanisation, issue, and permit, and here if you did decide to come to Britain and... if you want to come than you must come before the 1st of March. If you delay, then you have to wait. So there was a mass exodus. And this is what made me come to Britain. When I came here I used to live – me and my brother, my brother came with me as well – we used to stay as paying guests on Melton Road, you know. Then after two years I went back to Kenya, my parents were still there, at that time. And that is the time when I got married. Here I came in 1968, early '68, yeah? And I got married in 1970.

In the early 1970s, when the South Asians from East Africa started arriving in Britain, many experienced anti-immigration sentiments and hostility from sections of the British population, which have been on the rise since the early 1960s (Buettner 2014). Although hostility towards South Asian immigrants had been a constant feature of South Asian settlement in the UK, the arrival of East African (and especially Ugandan) South Asians set off a wave of racism. For example, The Leicester City Council “advised potential settlers to go elsewhere and a demonstration in London, spurred by Enoch Powell, protested against the Ugandan Asian ‘invasion’ of Britain” (Kuepper et al. and Marett in Herbert 2012, 307). The 1970s saw the growth of the National Front (an extremist right-wing organisation), the influence of which reached its peak in early 1977, but declined after the 1979 general elections (Martin and Singh 2002, 11; Winstone 1996, 34-5; Cannon and Crawcroft 2015). By the 1980s racist political activities lost their steam (see Clayton 2012, 1676) and “the ‘new left’ with its commitment to a multiracial city was firmly in power” (Martin and Singh 2002, 11).

Under a strict quota system the British government settled the East African South Asians in British ‘green zones’ (areas with low South Asian population) under the new paradigm of integration instead of assimilation – creating an integrated society accepting of cultural diversity, instead of expecting new immigrants to adopt the British way of life. Despite these methodical resettlement procedures many councils did not accept new migrants for fear of an electoral backlash, and migrants themselves showed preference to living in neighbourhoods where their friends and relatives had already settled. As a result, in the early 1970s “a large number of East African Gujaratis moved to Leicester and Wembley, [...] perpetuating the earlier pattern of spatial distribution” (Thandi 2007, 168).

Due to high levels of intra-UK migration, family reunions, and East African newcomers, the South Asian community in Leicester doubled in the 1970s, amounting to approximately 60,000 in 1981 (Martin and Singh 2002, 11). Much of the increase of the South Asian population of Leicester in this period can be attributed to the influx of East African South Asians – approximately 20,000 Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian South Asians moved to Leicester between 1968 and 1978 (Phillips 1981, 108). Great numbers of South Asians from East Africa

arrived in Leicester despite early attempts by the Ugandan Resettlement Board to divert Ugandan South Asians from major immigrant centres (such as Leicester) (ibid., 103-4), and the Leicester City Council supporting its attempts with an advert in a Ugandan newspaper urging South Asians to not come to Leicester (Martin and Singh 2002, 11, 26; see also Runnymede 2012, 17-18). These attempts obviously failed, as East African South Asians “now constitute the dominant sub-group in the Leicester Asian community and, as far as can be assessed, form one of the largest clusters of these refugees in the country” (Phillips 1981, 104). These ‘twice migrants’ often lacked the typical feature of a direct migrant – the myth of return – and they often concentrated all their efforts on successfully settling into the British society (Bhachu 1990; Ramji 2006).

The East African South Asians transformed from one of the poorest (a vast majority had to abandon most of their funds and possessions when leaving East Africa) to one of the richest ethnic groups in Britain (Herbert 2012, 307) and today Ugandan (and East African) South Asians living in Leicester are “praised for their role in revitalizing the local economy and helping the city achieve its international reputation for multicultural success” (ibid., 297). Countering the anti-immigrant hostility of the 1970s, the Leicester City Council had nine Labour Asian councillors by 1983 (Martin and Singh 2002, 11; for early 2000s data see Bonney and Le Goff 2007, 49), and in 1988 Leicester got its first South Asian mayor, Mr. Gordhan Parmar (Winstone 1996, 38). Leicester also produced the country’s first South Asian member of parliament since 1923 – Keith Vaz won Leicester East in the 1987 elections (Martin and Singh 2002, 12).

Residual communities of South Asians (some of which are Jain) still exist in East Africa, especially in Kenya (see V. Shah 2003) and Tanzania (see Anand and Kaul 2011), though they are about a quarter of the size they were in the early 1960s. There are still South Asians living in Uganda, though few, and even fewer in more southerly independent states of Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Madagascar, where South Asian settlers were always less numerous (Twaddle 1990, 150). Elsewhere in Africa, there are smaller groups of Gujarati Jains living in Sudan, and around a hundred Jains per country living in Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (P. C. Jain 2011, 90).

New Homes: Jains Around the World

Dundas (2002, 271) estimated that there were about a hundred thousand Jains living outside of India at the start of the 21st century (of which approximately 25-30,000 lived in Europe, 20,000 in Africa, over 45,000 in North America and 5,000 in the rest of Asia). According to a less rigorous,⁶⁰ but one of few wide-ranging sources on Jains living outside of India – *Jains in India and Abroad* by Prakash C. Jain (2011) – Jains can be found in Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, South Africa, East African countries, Fiji, Hong Kong, as well as oil-rich Persian Gulf countries, and other countries with smaller communities of Jains.

Most of the world's diasporic Jains reside in the USA, where up to 150,000 Jains live today, mostly in New Jersey, California, and New York (P. C. Jain 2011, 99-100). Currently, there are over a hundred Jain associations in the USA, of which about two-dozen are Jain temples. As a way of connecting such a vast and geographically dispersed religious community, a non-sectarian Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) was founded in 1981, and today it connects seventy Jain organisations across North America, represents over 100,000 North American Jains (JAINA 2018), and is an influential entity in diasporic Jainism primarily through organisation of bi-annual conventions and production of educational materials.⁶¹

Besides the Jains living in North America themselves, the majority of Jain Studies scholarship is also situated at North American universities. Unfortunately, the vast majority of scholars are not focusing on contemporary Jainism⁶² and even fewer are conducting research into diasporic Jainism,⁶³ some research exists that

⁶⁰ Prakash C. Jain's (2011) book was published by the International School for Jain Studies primarily for internal consumption by other Jains and often tends to inflate numerical estimates of Jain presence. For example, the author claimed there were 50,000 Jains in the UK in 2011, which is significantly more than the 20,000 Jains counted by the latest National Census (Office of National Statistics 2012) or the 25-30,000 Jains identified by informed estimates (Shah, Dwyer, Gilbert 2012).

⁶¹ JAINA educational materials are widely utilized in American *pathshalas*, but are not used by the Leicester Jain community.

⁶² For some exemplary studies of Jainism in contemporary India see Aukland 2013, Babb 1996, Cort 2001, Fohr 2007, Kelting 2001, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, Laidlaw 1995, Reynell 1985, Valley 2002a, and contributions to anthologies edited by Singhi 1987, Carrithers and Humphrey 1991, and Flügel 2006.

⁶³ Anne Valley deserves a particular mention for her penetrating work with North American Jain youth and women (Valley 2002b, 2004, 2006a, 2006b), though work among postgraduate and

focuses on American Jains and several studies have been published comparing American Jains with a select number of other Jain communities in diaspora,⁶⁴ yet more research is needed to better understand the landscape of North American Jainism.

The UK – and England in particular – is the main country of settlement for Jains immigrating to Europe.⁶⁵ Jains started migrating to the UK in noticeable numbers after the 1960s, either from India or East Africa and they primarily settled in and around bigger towns such as London (where the majority of English Jains live), Leicester, Manchester and Birmingham. In Leicester in the 1980s there were around a hundred Jain households or approximately five hundred Jains (Banks 1992, 154). The president of the Leicester Jain Centre at the time of my fieldwork, Ushaben Mehta, as well as the Centre's internal records paint a picture of growth among the Leicester Jains over the last three decades since Banks conducted his study, as there were around 1,500 Jains living in Leicester and its surroundings in 2016.

Besides the Jain Centre in Leicester, there are a handful of other Jain places of worship in England such as Hindu temples with Jain images, private homes open to worship, smaller and bigger converted buildings, and most notably the first purpose-built Jain temple in the UK in Potters Bar, outer London (Shah, Dwyer, and Gilbert 2012; Dwyer, Gilbert, and Shah 2013; see also Starkey and Tomalin 2016).

Migratory Past Reflected in the Religious Present

After their arrival to Leicester, a significant number of middle-aged Jains started taking a greater interest in religion and establishing the Leicester Jain Centre – potentially as a continuation of their community-forming practices developed in East Africa, a defence mechanism towards wider anti-immigration sentiments present in

postdoctoral researchers such as Shivani Bothra (2016) and Brianne Donaldson (2013, 2016) also contributes to the knowledge on North American Jains. For Canada see H. C. Jain 1990.

⁶⁴ The most prolific in this regard is Bindi Shah, who examines topics of identity and organizational strategies among British and American Jain youth (B. Shah 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2014, 2017; Shah, Dwyer, and Gilbert 2012; Dwyer, Gilbert, and Shah 2013). Tine Vekemans (2014, 2015) also researches digital and online engagement of Jains living in the UK, USA, and Belgium.

⁶⁵ There is also a sizeable population of Jains in the Belgian city of Antwerp (see Helmer 2009, Roos 2014) and a small community of Jains in Switzerland (see Iseli 2015, 2016).

the 1970s in England, or as a way of developing a social network and a sense of belonging in an otherwise unfamiliar city. Establishing the Jain Samaj and working towards owning property were both steps toward what later became the Leicester Jain Centre (whose history was discussed in *Chapter 1*).

A year after the Ugandan expulsion, in 1973, the Leicester Jain community (the Jain Samaj) amassed enough funds to be able to purchase and maintain a dedicated Jain Centre in Leicester. People like Dr Natubhai Shah (who spearheaded the building of the Leicester Jain Centre and led the community for over a decade), Dr Rameshbhai Mehta (who was also very involved in the creation of the Centre, served as its president for two terms, and remains an important figure in the community), and Bharatbhai (a religious elder known for his mastery of ritual texts, presented in this thesis under an alias) started exploring their relationship with Jainism in greater depth after their move to Leicester. While people like Dr Rameshbhai Mehta devoted themselves to the running of the Centre, Bharatbhai applied himself to memorising religious texts and learning about Jainism from knowledgeable people such as Dr Natubhai Shah and Jayeshbhai, the community's religious leader who arrived in Leicester in 2001 and served the community until late 2016.

Bharatbhai's story

Actually I was born in Chennai [Tamil Nadu, India]. And then my parents, they moved to Zanzibar, from Zanzibar we went back to India – Jamnagar, you know? – then from Jamnagar, in 1948 we came to... because my dad was in Kenya, you see? Nairobi. So we arrived in 1948, Nairobi, and, hum, then, when my dad – he was a religious person, you know, so he taught us all these prayers and everything, you know. Well, we had a *pathshala*, but, hum, the teacher used to just give us some lessons to cram all the prayers and all that – *stotras* and all. But not very deep knowledge in Jainism, you know. The basic, we don't know anything about it. And then, hum, I started schooling. Since 1954 I left the school at the age of fifteen, then I joined my dad's business. I worked in the business for three years and then I joined the

bank. From there I worked for sixteen years in the bank and then I worked one year, hum – what do you call? – had to wait for the visa to come here.

So in 1971 I came here. 1st April, like that. I arrived in London, you know? Yeah. I was working in the post office. Since '71 I was working in the post. And I retired in 1989. After my retirement I started taking a lot of interest in all this. I didn't know anything except *navkar* [*mantra*]. Nothing else I used to know. But then I came in this country, then I started learning one by one, you know. By books, by cassette... Because in 1988, when there was the *prathishta*, the person came from India to do all the rituals, you know, the very learned person to do all this, most of the time he was with me. Since then I was learning all the... every time, whenever I have time I used to learn myself, you know, I used to teach my [grand]children. Because... parents, they don't know anything. And they were lucky that I was there, you know.

Because my children, we have not given much of the knowledge to them, because we didn't know much about that. You see, when they were young. I come to know after in 1980, 1990, you know. I was just converting myself into religion a little bit. So my grandchildren, they know everything – more than their dad, you know. Say, in Africa there were three generations already passed. You know, in Africa. Came in 19th century, 1920, 1930, and people were there two, three generations. Then religion's gone. Not much left. Only religious [people] used to do some, you know. And then their children, their children now, it's nothing, you know, they've got nothing.

The status of most Leicester Jains as 'twice migrants' (or their descendants), who have lived in East Africa after emigrating from India and before migrating to England, gives an indication of the problems faced by the Leicester Jain community. As a big portion of Leicester Jains (or at least their recent ancestors) lived in East Africa for a significant period of time, a loss of religious knowledge occurred through their distance from the centres of Jain knowledge, particularly the Jain ascetics. With few religious experts on hand, the extent of religious knowledge

shrank, the people's interest in Jainism decreased, and the ability to transmit religious knowledge and zeal to their children lessened (see Banks 1992, 184-5).

Bharatbhai readily admitted to a lack of religious knowledge before his exposure to knowledgeable lay figures visiting Leicester and more free time after his retirement. Having delved deeper into Jainism as a pensioner, he started prioritising religious activities more and wishing the younger generations would do the same. As he could no longer transmit his religious knowledge to his sons (who were then in their thirties or forties), he instead spent time teaching his five grandchildren about Jainism. Yet the lack of religious knowledge and commitment of the youth's parents had an impact on their children. Many religious elders of the Leicester Jain community (such as Bharatbhai as well as the Centre's president at the time, Ms Ushaben Mehta) traced the decreased engagement in Jain activities by the Leicester Jain youth to their parents' lack of religiosity and interest in Jainism. While we will examine the youth's religious practice more closely in the next chapter (*Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*), it should be mentioned that the Leicester Jain youth was seen as particularly uninterested in Jainism by their older counterparts.

Yet the problem of decreased youth activity in the Leicester Jain Centre can be viewed as stemming from the community's migratory past and from the progressive loss of religious knowledge that occurred through the generations of Jains who lived outside of India. With the deterioration of religious knowledge came a decline in religiosity, which was then transmitted to the consecutive generations of Leicester Jains and is now much bemoaned by the older generation of Leicester Jains.

Cracks in the Chain of Religious Transmission

While migration may seem like an isolated event in the history of an individual or a community, the consequences of migration have long-lasting effects that span generations. Leaving a familiar environment, especially one of traditional religious presence, has an important impact on the practice of religion and in the case of the Leicester Jain community I want to focus on three elements in particular: the absence of Jain ascetics, the loss of structures for transmission of religious knowledge, and a lower religious saturation of the diasporic environment. These three elements have exerted their influence on different generations of Leicester Jains over several

decades of their migration history and worked in combination with each other to gradually crack the chain of religious transmission⁶⁶ in the Leicester Jain community.

Absence of Jain Ascetics

The first major factor impacting the practice of Jainism in Leicester is the absence of traditional figures of religious authority in the form of Jain ascetics. After taking *diksha* (an initiating, world-renouncing ceremony for Jain ascetics), *sadhus* and *sadhvis* (or alternatively referred to as ‘monks’ and ‘nuns’ and sometimes as ‘saints’ by the Jains) do not own any money, have renounced all possessions, rely on laypeople’s alms for survival, and cannot use vehicles to travel and thus continuously wander around on foot. Their ascetic vows therefore keep them tethered to bigger clusters of Jains and the Indian soil, with only a handful of Terapanthi female ascetics residing in places of Jain diaspora (e.g., London, England and Miami, Florida).⁶⁷ Having devoted their life to religious study and adopted a demanding ascetic life, the Jain ascetics are seen to represent the highest living religious authority by the Jain laity and are often consulted on various religious and practical matters by Indian Jains, who also regularly visit them and attend their lectures (particularly during *chaturmas*, the rainy season, when ascetics remain at a single location and are thus more accessible to the local community).

Jains living outside of India are unable to maintain such regular contact with Jain ascetics and their religious knowledge, encouragement, and influence. Some might visit them while traveling in India, perhaps listen to the lectures of certain ascetics on YouTube,⁶⁸ or on occasions ask a relative or friend to convey a question

⁶⁶ While the reference to ‘a chain of religious transmission’ is reminiscent of Hervieu-Leger’s theory and monograph *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (2006), I will not engage with memory studies in this thesis, as I found the concept of religious transmission to carry more explanatory value in the case of Leicester Jains (although transmission is, of course, a key element of religious memory as well).

⁶⁷ Some Terapanthi ascetics are able to live outside of India because they are not yet fully initiated and can therefore travel, stay in one place, and have some possessions, typically in order to pursue an advanced academic degree in Jainism prior to a full initiation. Since there are no Terapanthi lay followers in Leicester, they are not considered important and are often viewed as not particularly authoritative due to the partiality of their ascetic vows.

⁶⁸ The vast majority of Jain ascetics do not use or even touch electronic devices and very few utilise microphones or consent to being recorded. The handful of ascetics who use technology to reach wider

to a chosen ascetic on their behalf. Yet Jain ascetics are not a stable part of the diasporic Jain experience and there is therefore a general absence of traditional religious authorities in Leicester (and diaspora more broadly). While we will look at the traditional role of ascetics in Gujarati Jainism in *Chapter 6 (Echoes from India)* and further examine the effects of ascetic absence on the Leicester Jain community in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*, let me highlight a few key consequences at this point already. In places of traditional Jain presence (like Jamnagar), Jain ascetics continuously stream through local *upashrays* and influence the community with their preaching, they advise laypeople on religious or everyday matters, and are a visible representation of a religious ideal that all should aspire to. Being in regular contact with the ascetics gives lay Jains a constant reminder of their religiosity and encourages them to devote more time to their religious practice. Furthermore, the availability of ascetics to provide explanations of particular doctrines, beliefs, and practices, ensures a certain level of doctrinal homogeneity and orthodoxy among the local Jain population. That is due to the fact that the source of religious authority is centralised in the form of ascetics as a group (although individual ascetics change, they all draw on the same source of religious authority) and the interpretation of Jainism among them is relatively stable and uniform, since they base it on the study of the same religious texts.

Since the holders of religious authority, repositories of religious knowledge, and exemplars of religious life – that is, Jain ascetics – cannot leave India, they have been generally absent from the lives of Leicester Jains and their ancestors both in England and East Africa. Without a constant reminder of religious ideals, religiosity among diaspora Jains decreased; without the breathing repositories of religious expertise, knowledge among the lay Jains living abroad gradually dissipated; and without the representations of religious authority embodied in Jain ascetics, the interpretation of Jain beliefs and practices became the domain of lay individuals.

audiences are therefore generally more liberal in their views and are not representative of the ascetics Indian Jains would typically be in regular contact with.

Loss of Structures for Religious Transmission

Having lost the presence of the traditional religious authorities, the Jains living in diaspora also lost the proximity of other unofficial sources of religious knowledge, such as learned members of the local Jain community and religiously experienced older relatives. Particularly older family members would typically be in charge of teaching children the performance of rituals by taking them along to *pujas* or *darshans*, instilling in them daily religious practice, and telling them religious narratives connected with important figures of Jainism. While the general contours of Jain doctrine and the contextual knowledge of Jain rituals would be provided by parents or family members in individual homes, the more technical knowledge of ritual texts would be supplied by local *pathshalas*, or religious classes for children.

As we shall see in the next chapter (*Intergenerational Innovation*), the Jain religious education for children has traditionally focused on memorization of *mantras* and texts needed for the performance of rituals expected of lay followers, that is *samayik* and *pratikraman*. Such a *pathshala* has a clear and complementary function in the overall structure of religious transmission in Indian Jain communities, where it works in tandem with the primary vehicle of religious transmission (i.e., the family) in order to provide specialised training in religious practice for children. With the decreasing religious knowledge of lay family members (largely connected to the absence of ascetics), the parents and older family members were less able to provide the broader understanding of Jainism to function as a frame of reference for the ritual texts learnt at *pathshala*, and thus the knowledge gained through text memorisation became de-contextualised and the *pathshala* became an unsuitable vehicle of primary religious transmission. Without the family members providing additional context and knowledge to the younger Jains living in diaspora, religious knowledge was lost – a loss, which was further amplified across generations of diasporic Jains, as Bharatbhai already mentioned above, when he said:

Say, in Africa there were three generations already passed, you know, in Africa. Came in 19th century, 1920, 1930, and people were there two, three generations. Then religion's gone. Not much left. Only religious [people] used to do some, you know. But not... And then their children, their children now, it's nothing, you know, they've got nothing.

In East Africa and later in Leicester the de-contextualised *pathshala* was not an effective channel of religious transmission precisely due to the lack of a support structure of more knowledgeable relatives and acquaintances. As we shall see in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, the Leicester Jain community eventually recognised the unsuitability of the traditional model of *pathshala* as a channel of religious transmission and substituted it with a more comprehensive children's religious education.

Reduced Religious Saturation of the Socio-Cultural Environment

Lastly, the most elusive influence of the Leicester Jain community's migration history on the practice of Jainism in Leicester today is the lower religious – or more specifically Jain – saturation of the English environment. Firstly, there are fewer Jain worship spaces available – while there is a Jain Centre available in Leicester, that is not the case for all English Jains and was also not the case for most Jains living in East Africa, who often lived in areas without an easy access to an exclusively Jain worship space. The lack of religious infrastructure in the form of dedicated worship centres affected the practice of Jainism in diaspora, not only through the inaccessibility of dedicated religious spaces, but also through decreased attendance in the religious centres available.

Furthermore, there are fewer co-religionists around. In Indian cities with traditional Jain presence fellow-Jains are easily accessible and bring with them a level of peer-pressure and informal social control,⁶⁹ which encourages other Jains to devote more of their time to religious practice. In Leicester (and East Africa) the Jain community was comparatively small and the lack of such indirect encouragement gradually resulted in changed patterns of religious practice. Without other Jains, who would be able to act either as role models or socially sanction inappropriate activities (like eating particular foods) through (non-)verbal communication or ostracising, the Leicester Jains felt less pressure to conform to Jain behavioural norms and/or perform physical expressions of religiosity than they would in a non-diasporic environment.

⁶⁹ For an overview of (in)formal social control theory see Chriss 2007.

Additionally, there is also less wider societal understanding of Jainism and its practices. While such understanding is particularly relevant when it comes to the daily Jain practices (such as following Jain dietary prohibitions, attending Jain holidays and celebrations, etc.), it also influences the understanding of Jainism by diasporic Jains themselves. By encountering societal ignorance regarding Jainism, having to continuously explain the basic facets of the tradition, and having little practical support for their practices (such as Jain-friendly restaurants or days off work for Jain holidays), Jains living in diaspora have a harder time ensuring a continuity of religious practice and commitment, and are thus compelled to change their practice of Jainism.

The lack of religious infrastructure, numerically smaller local communities, and the unfamiliarity of other people with Jainism worked together to further chip away at the chain of religious transmission that has already been weakened by progressive loss of religiosity and religious knowledge explored above.

Cascading Consequences

While the Jains living in Kenya, Uganda, or Tanzania were chronologically less removed from the traditionally Jain environments of Gujarat (or elsewhere in India), there were nevertheless no ascetics nearby, older relatives tended to emigrate less often, and a general familiarity with Jainism was limited to other Indian East Africans. Additionally, a lack of religious centres and a decontextualized memorisation-based *pathshala* of East African Jain communities contributed to the initial stage of decline in Jain practice in diaspora.

Suryaben's story

Although I was born in India, all my family members are born in Uganda, Africa. So I was three months baby when we went to Africa and in all honesty there, we didn't know much about Jainism directly, cause we were more exposed to Hindu temples. So we used to go to most Hindu festivals and Hindu temples – from time to time. And in my early days I don't

remember much. In terms of very minimalistic exposure, perhaps, to Jainism. And very minimalistic understanding as well. We didn't have a Jain temple, we didn't have a *pathshala*, we didn't... To me the more powerful memories are the fact that we went to the Hindu temple.

Having then sort of left Uganda and we came to Mombasa from where we took a ship to come to India. And I remember going and my mum and dad taking us to the first Jain temple – in Mombasa. And that was quite an experience really. But then having come to India, we were exposed to all my mum's relations and they were quite staunch Jain practitioners. I mean India – in Ahmedabad. So then coming to India, that was a big, big, big change. Hum, but having said that, I still remember going... since we began to – not understand, but observe. So we'd go to the *derasar*, just in the evenings, but not in the mornings to do *puja* and everything. In part, I think, looking back now, maybe my first *puja* perhaps, where I was more aware and understood a bit more, it may well be in Leicester. When I was sixteen or, yeah...

Well, we all had British passports and my dad came here when we migrated from East Africa to India. And we went before the expulsion, so we didn't come here first, we went to India. And before the expulsion my dad's shop was located and we won't lose his license. But because we didn't have anyone in the family with Ugandan passport – as in, at the time, in 1970, 69, 70s – although he wasn't on the main street, he lost his license to trade. And interestingly, they didn't want to give up their British passport – I wish I could ask my dad why he never chose to. So, somehow... Because my sisters and brother were there, we decided to emigrate to India. So it was easy for us to integrate in the UK life, then it was for all to integrate in Indian life, although we're Indians. So my dad had started a factory, but it didn't really... It was just too different a psychology. So he just left everything and decided to emigrate to UK. So because of my dad then, without question we just moved to Leicester.

As Suryaben mentioned, she was more familiar with Hinduism than Jainism in her youth due to a more established Hindu infrastructure in East Africa and a generally Hindu religious saturation in East African Indian communities in which Jains tended to participate. She did not have access to a *pathshala*, either one focused on text memorisation or another kind of religious instruction, and while her mother was very devout and practiced *pratikraman* daily, Suryaben did not gain much knowledge of Jainism, as she mentioned in her story. She started engaging more with Jainism after her arrival in Leicester and as she grew older (she was in her fifties at the time of the interview), though she still considered herself not knowledgeable enough, since she was not able to recite Jain ritual texts by heart or practice *pratikraman* and/or *samayik* daily.

As Suryaben mentioned in her story, she came to Leicester in her teens after a childhood with little religious exposure and no structured religious education. Yet even after her arrival, there was no established children's religious education (or *pathshala*) she could join. Arriving in Leicester in her teens she was already older than the typical *pathshala*-goers in Indian *pathshala* classes and perhaps that is the reason why she said: "*And then it was much later on that... I think... my dad had started a pathshala, but I don't remember going to it. Somehow I don't.*" Thus she fell through the cracks of the Leicester Jain community and their children's religious education, which was in the early stages of establishment, and lost out on acquiring religious knowledge in her youth. There were many children like her, who came to Leicester from East Africa to either no religious education altogether or to the de-contextualised *pathshala* mentioned above. Today, these children are parents with children of their own and with a distinct position in the generational composition of the Leicester Jain community, to which we turn next.

Intergenerational Differences in Religious Practice

The migrational history explored above and the religious transmission structures (un)available to Leicester Jains played a significant role in the formation of generational differences in the Leicester Jain community. The Jains, who arrived in Leicester as children or teenagers in the 1970s and 1980s did not have access to

comprehensive religious education and were thus not able to acquire extensive and thorough understanding of Jain belief and practice. In the case of the Leicester Jain community the chasm of religious knowledge was, therefore, not between old and young, as both were (to a certain extent) versed in religious texts, rituals, and doctrines fundamental to Jainism. The older generation acquired the knowledge of Jainism predominantly through engagement with more learned members of the community or individual exploration of literary or audio sources available, and the youth obtained such knowledge mostly in the reformed children's religious education (or the 'new *pathshala*' which will be explored in the next chapter). Both young and old Leicester Jains had a basic command of Jainism, though their varying levels of knowledge and engagement with it were often criticised. The contrast in relation to general religious knowledge and familiarity was drawn between the 'middle generation' of parents and the two other generations, namely the children and their grandparents.

Young and Old Leicester Jains

In this thesis everyone above sixty years old is characterised as 'older generation' and that unquestionably glosses over the internal variety within the generation itself. Yet some characteristics connect all the members of this generation: they generally came to Leicester as adults, mainly after spending their childhood in East Africa, have established their families and careers in England, and are now in (or close to) retirement. Since they no longer had primary caring responsibilities and had more time available, some older Leicester Jains chose to devote more time to religion – Ishitaben (whom we met above) and her husband, for example, chose to retire early to be able to travel and devote more time to the Jain Centre.

While the older generation of Leicester Jains grew up with little religious education in East Africa (they either had a version of decontextualized 'traditional *pathshala*,' or – more often – no *pathshala* available to them), they were able to acquire religious knowledge later in life (like Bharatbhai mentioned above). Many viewed the Jain Centre's religious specialist, Jayeshbhai, as a source of religious knowledge and inspiration and often came to listen to his speeches and lectures either at the two adult religious classes held in the Centre's *upashray*, during

monthly *satsangs*,⁷⁰ or at other events. As a rule, it was older people, who typically filled the seating in the temple hall of the Jain Centre for various communal rituals, and who most often visited the Jain Centre to perform *puja*. Older Jains were more likely to engage in fasting, were stricter with following the Jain dietary prohibitions, and saw rituals such as *puja* or *samayik* as an important part of their religious practice. That, of course, does not mean that all older Leicester Jains came to the Jain Centre regularly, engaged in frequent ritual performance, or devoted a lot of time to religious study – some older Leicester Jains were more engaged with Jainism, while others were not. Instead (as will become clearer in the next chapter), the Jainism they generally tended to value and practice was a Jainism rather similar to the one found in Gujarat, where ritual activity, temple visitation, and compliance with Jain behavioural rules were seen as the basic form of lay practice.

The older generation's 'traditional' style of practice was in stark contrast with the practice of the Leicester Jain youth. In this thesis the youth is generally defined as aged between fifteen and thirty years and thus generally before having children of their own. Although the age delineation of fifteen to thirty years is not exact and the youth's style of Jain practice was sometimes practiced by those in their mid and late thirties as well, it generally holds that the fifteen- to thirty-year-olds were particularly characteristic representatives of the youth's style of Jain practice. While the youth's Jainism will be explored in-depth in the next chapter (*Intergenerational Innovation*), it is worth highlighting that for the youth rituals, temples, and behavioural codes held less importance than for the older generation of Leicester Jains, while understanding doctrines and rituals was of the utmost and key importance. The youth often emphasised the need to understand specific beliefs and practices before adopting them and were critical of the ritual performance and temple attendance embraced by the older Leicester Jains. As we will see in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, one of the factors contributing to the youth's reinterpretation of Jainism were *pathshala* classes, which in 2011 switched to more doctrine-focused curriculum, as well as the position of their parents as a generation,

⁷⁰ *Satsang* translates to a gathering of truth, an association with people seeking the truth, or a true community. In the case of Leicester Jains it refers to monthly meetings, which are intended to bring the entire community together in worship.

which lost out on religious acquisition in their youth and was therefore limited in the transmission of religious knowledge onto their children.

Caught in the Middle: The ‘Sandwich Generation’

Being caught between elders and youth, the ‘middle generation’ were marked by their in-between-ness and the need to negotiate between the older and younger generations’ interpretations and practices of Jainism without their own clear position or style of practice. Being characterised by this linking position in the community, we can think of them as a ‘sandwich generation’ – positioned in the middle between two clearly defined generations, the ‘sandwich generation’ themselves had a much less well-defined position and style of practice, yet played an important explanatory role in the evolution of the youth’s interpretation of Jainism (explored in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*).

In general, the ‘sandwich generation’ of the Leicester Jain community were a loose grouping of Leicester Jains roughly between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five, who came to England as children or teenagers, and grew up in a diasporic environment without an effective children’s religious education. At the time of my research they were the parents of children or young adults, who gained religious knowledge in the *pathshala* classes in a manner unavailable to their parents in their youth. Because of this discrepancy in access to and attainment of religious knowledge the ‘sandwich generation’ were also less likely to actively participate in Jain Centre’s activities, attend their events, and perform various rituals, though work commitments, caring responsibilities, and raising children were often the key reasons for their absence.

Nevertheless, the ‘sandwich generation’ of Leicester Jains was often accused of religious ignorance, indifference, and passivity by the older generation, because they were not seen to be imparting religious knowledge onto their children, attending religious or social events at the Leicester Jain Centre, or actively participating in any other activities at the Centre. Ushaben Mehta, the president of the Jain Centre at the time of my fieldwork, and Bharatbhai, an elder in his seventies, whom we already met, both expressed disapproval of the youth’s parents and their lack of engagement with Jainism.

I think busy lifestyle and... when [the children are] younger and they're in Leicester, the parents are too busy to bring them. Unless there was something focused on it – like a Diwali programme, they're focusing on Diwali programme, so then they'll keep on bringing them. But they won't just bring them... They won't say “let's go to Jain Centre, sit in the library and read a book,” they won't do that. Which, you know, they read a book to the kids at home, don't they? So, no, they won't do that. (Ushaben)

But the parents have to take interest. But when parents can take interest? When he's interested. When he's got no interest in religion, so what he's going to do then? Now the parents come here [Jain Centre] – they send him to pathshala, come here, pick them, go do shopping, come. And they don't ask you “what you are doing?” Because he doesn't know himself what to ask. [...] How the parents can repeat [the sutra], when they don't know themselves? If I know, then I can teach my... My – both the sons – they don't know much about. But the grandchildren, they know more than them. More than them. (Bharatbhai)

There seems to be a particular contrast Ushaben and Bharatbhai drew between the ‘Leicester parents,’ their children, and their own generation. While the children were portrayed in more passive terms, their parents were invested with a lot more responsibility and blame. In the quote above, Bharatbhai almost equated the religious knowledge of his grandchildren with his own and juxtaposed it with a religious ignorance attributed to his two sons. The contrast – in Bharatbhai’s eyes – was thus not between old and young, but between the ‘sandwich generation’ of parents and the two other generations.⁷¹

Transmitting Jainism

The scholarly literature on cultural and religious transmission differentiates between *vertical transmission* (from parents to children, or between generations), *horizontal transmission* (between friends and peers, or within a single generation), and *oblique transmission* (influences from authority figures other than parents, such as teachers,

⁷¹ It should be noted that not all older Leicester Jains possessed a religious knowledge on par with Bharatbhai’s and he criticised their lack of involvement at numerous points in our interview. The religious knowledge of Jain youth could also be called into question, though it is safe to presume a general familiarity with Jainism, its rituals, doctrines, and stories for all *pathshala*-attending youth.

mentors, role-models, opinion leaders, parents' friends, and other agents) (see Schönplflug 2008b, Trommsdorff 2008). While more is written on the topics of cultural transmission than religious transmission (see Berliner and Sarró 2007, Ellen 2013, Schönplflug 2008a), a quantitative approach to transmission of religious identification, values, and practices has been utilised in a number of studies focusing on religious transmission (see Acock and Bengtson 1978, Bader and Desmond 2006, Erickson 1992, Hoge et al 1982, Myers 1996, Nelsen 1980, Verkuyten et al 2012, Vermeer and Groen 2013). In such studies the parents are consistently found to be the main source of religious transmission and socialisation (as is also the case for transmission of political values [ter Bogt et al 2008]), yet most of these studies focus on religious transmission in majority (i.e., Christian) religious traditions. Instead, two other studies are worth highlighting in relation to the religious transmission among Leicester Jains, as they both focus on immigrant communities and both demonstrate the vital role of parents in transmission of religious practice to their children.

Mieke Maliepaard and Marcel Lubbers (2013) investigated the success of religious transmission of self-identified Muslim parents to their second-generation children in the Netherlands, and Afir and Aviad Rubin (2014) focused on intergenerational transmission mechanisms among second-generation Jewish migrants from Israel and the former Soviet Union to the USA. Looking at individual Jewish practices, Rubin and Rubin (2014, 272) found that "the likelihood of preserving a specific practice depends primarily on vertical transmission (i.e., whether this practice had been observed at home)", and Maliepaard and Lubbers (2013, 437) echo their finding when they write: "in addition to their self-ascription, parents also influence the degree to which their children hold certain attitudes and the frequency with which they attend the mosque." In both of the studies parents are singled out as the main agents of transmission of religious beliefs with "moderately strong" statistical correlations between theirs and their children's "self-identification, public religious practice such as attendance at religious ceremonies and, to a lesser extent, strength of religious commitment" (ibid., 428).

Given that parents are the main agents of religious transmission, the deficient religious socialisation of the Leicester Jain 'sandwich generation' therefore takes on additional importance in relation to the religious practices of the Leicester Jain

youth. Since the youth's parents did not have a good base of religious knowledge to transmit to their children, were often less enthusiastic about visiting the Jain Centre (as Ushaben mentioned above), and might not have instilled a high level of religious devotion in their own children, the Leicester Jain youth of today therefore had a religious upbringing characterised less by vertical transmission (from their parents) then by horizontal (and oblique) transmission. The *pathshala* (children's religious education) classes and the group of friends they acquired either within the Jain community or outwith it thus heavily shaped the religious expression of the youth, making it further differentiated from the religious practice of their parents and grandparents.

Conclusion: Religious Transmission and Intergenerational Change

When discussing religious change in the Leicester Jain community, it is important to note that the community's migratory past and their 'twice migrant' status play a key role. A progressive loss of knowledge and religiosity can be traced to earlier generations – perhaps to the initial ancestors who left India, moved to East Africa, and established their lives there – and their increased geographical distance from the Jain ascetics, centres of Jain practice, and the majority of their co-religionists, which were and continue to be situated in India. With a hindered ability to transmit a comprehensive understanding of Jainism to new generations, the Jainism as it exists in Leicester today exhibits layers of historical factors that have impacted its practice.

The decades of being removed from Jain ascetics, the loosening of religious transmission structures, and existing in a religiously unfamiliar and uninformed environment have made their mark on Leicester Jainism and have started forming cracks in the chain of religious transmission. One of the consequences of Leicester Jains' migration history is the formation of three distinct generations in the Leicester Jain community – the 'older generation', who practice a style of Jainism typically found in Gujarat (and elsewhere in India) and have acquired religious knowledge later in life through engagement with knowledgeable lay figures; the 'sandwich generation,' who obtained limited religious knowledge through fragmented

transmission channels in their youth and were thus less active in the Jain Centre; and the 'young generation', who were engaging in religious innovation sparked by the interpretational freedom afforded to them by weakened vertical transmission channels and a more doctrine-heavy children's religious education (more on that in the next chapter).

Throughout the Leicester Jains' migration history the absence of Jain ascetics, the loss of religious transmission structures, and the reduced environmental religious saturation influenced the community and through time added layers of historical influences, which steered the Leicester Jain community towards a religious practice marked by a tri-partite generational configuration. Thus migration patterns discussed at the beginning of the chapter are not something consigned to the past, but manifest themselves in the present through varying familiarity with Jainism, altered vehicles of religious transmission, and changed religious practices in a distinct generational pattern. An additional consequence of this generational split, as well as the changes in religious transmission and the influences from the socio-cultural environment, is the fact that a new interpretation of Jainism is starting to emerge among the younger Leicester Jains, one that does not rely as much on performance of rituals and temple visitations, but instead emphasises in-depth understanding of Jain doctrines and rituals. And it is to this interpretation of Jainism that we turn next.

Intergenerational Innovation

*Vignette: A Monthly Satsang*⁷²

The booming, slightly nasal voice of the religious leader was accompanied by the sound of drums and small hand cymbals giving rhythm to his devotional song and was periodically pierced by singsongy responses from the congregation. Jayeshbhai, the religious specialist of the Leicester Jain community, was leading the gathered crowd in their monthly worship and instructing the people gathered at the front of the large temple hall on how to perform the actions of *snatra puja*, which recreate the events of a *tirthankar*'s birth. Three silver-haired men and seven sari-cladded women were jostling around a small golden statue of Mahavir-swami positioned at the front, while another forty men and seventy women sat on red upholstered chairs that filled the rest of the temple hall and observed their actions.

The lady sitting next to me wore a pink sari tied Gujarati style – with the *pallu* hanging in front, covering her chest and abdomen, and proudly displaying its intricate silver design – with her cane tucked away under her chair. The next one over was being helped out of a brown woollen cardigan by her middle-aged daughter, who wore her salt-and-pepper hair in a long braid and smiled while whispering to her mother in Gujarati. In front of me I recognised a retired computer programmer and behind me sat 'my Indian grandmother,' who decided to spend the last part of her life in an assisted living centre a mere five minutes away from the Leicester Jain Centre. On the other side of the hall were rows of greying and bald men dressed in freshly-pressed white or light blue shirts and equally crisp-looking trousers. They looked upon the *snatra puja* taking place at the front with a calm expression and occasionally contributed to the action with quiet singing or lukewarm clapping. I noticed a twelve-year-old boy, who sat down next to his grandfather close to the *snatra puja* activity and joined in the accompaniment of Jayeshbhai's singing

⁷² This description is a depiction of a generic, though typical event. The substantive content is representative of similar events in the Jain Centre and is based on numerous participant observations of such occasions.

with his own set of drums, and a six-year-old girl dressed in a Disney princess gown, who wandered from behind one of the sandstone pillars in the inner temple and threw herself into the arms of her mother sitting on the floor in the front of the hall.

I looked around the temple hall and realised that out of over a hundred people present in the room, most of them were over sixty years old. Besides a handful of children excitedly exploring the insides of the temple and an odd teenager or two present, there were few Leicester Jains below the age of forty that came to the event and participated in the worship. Where were all the youth? Echoes of an elderly man complaining about the inactivity and disinterest of Leicester Jain youth in one of my interviews rang true, but were quickly paired with the frequent protests of my younger interviewees, who did not see the point of the elaborate rituals being performed at the front of the temple hall and preferred to focus on finding the essence of Jain teachings in their everyday lives.

* * *

Rather quickly into my fieldwork it became clear that the starkest difference in religious practice was between old and young Leicester Jains. Older people regularly attended evening *aartis*, came in greater numbers for *puja* on weekends, and filled the temple hall during monthly *satsangs*. I began recognising most of their faces, knew a fair number of their names, and was comfortable joking around with a handful of over-sixty-year-olds. Yet it was difficult for me to establish rapport with Leicester Jains under the age of thirty, as they came to the Jain Centre less regularly, stayed for a shorter amount of time, and were less likely to participate in the rituals performed in the temple. As I embarked on enquiring further into the generational difference between the older and younger Leicester Jains, contours of two different styles of practice began to emerge – one marked by traditionally recognisable patterns of Jain practice, and a religious innovation sweeping through the younger generation of Leicester Jains.

In this chapter we will explore these differences in the styles of practice, inspect the intricacies of the youth's view of Jainism, and delve into a handful of reasons contributing to this shift. Since the way young Leicester Jains practiced Jainism was quite different from the Jainism encountered among their co-religionists in India (as well as among older Jains in the UK), this chapter will explore exactly how the

Leicester Jain youth interpreted and practiced Jainism and how they related their practice to that of the older Leicester Jains. I will adopt the framework of ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism to explore the difference between the youth’s and the older generation’s styles of religious practice and utilise Heelas and Woodhead’s (2005) theory of a ‘subjective turn’ to situate the youth’s ‘spiritual’ Jainism in the broader context of contemporary British religiosity. In order to better understand the youth’s religious innovation I will also examine the roles of language, children’s religious education, and socio-geographical location on youth’s practice of Jainism.

Two Styles of Practice

As already mentioned in the previous chapter (*Historical Trajectory*), I generally define youth as Leicester Jains aged between fifteen and thirty years (or typically before having children of their own). Children below the age of fifteen were not included, as their views on Jainism were still in formation and thus not stable enough for a discursive analysis, though my visits to the Jain Centre’s *pathshala* (or children’s religious education, which includes children roughly between four and fourteen years of age) are nevertheless incorporated into the analysis, as the way Jainism is communicated and transmitted to the Jain children shapes their later understanding and practice of it. Although the youth is rather clearly defined with the adoption of the fifteen-to-thirty age brackets, the youth’s style of practice discussed below was not limited to only the individuals within this age group – sometimes those in their thirties (or older) exhibited affiliation to the youth’s interpretation of Jainism and incorporated some of their views into their own practice. Yet on the whole, the youth’s style of Jain practice was predominantly just that – the *youth’s* style of practice – and was largely designated to the younger generation of Leicester Jains.



Image 8: Leicester Jain youth during Paryushan 2016 (image by the author)⁷³

Most members of the Leicester Jain community that I interacted with during my fieldwork spoke at various lengths about elements of intergenerational difference in religious practice – either reflecting on it with a hint of regret (for older Jains) or claiming a reinvigorated sense of aspiration (for younger Leicester Jains). The Leicester Jain youth were particularly vocal in delineating and defending their vision of Jainism, especially when contrasting their practice to the one they ascribed to older Leicester Jains.

I would say the older generation, because they've come from a Jain environment of either India or Africa before they were here, they've got their core belief instilled in them. They know the stutis, the stotras, the prayers, you know. So they're much more able to practice easily. Also, they've got years of non-external influence, where they were in those Jain environments. To have it inbuilt within them that this is how we live. This is how we practice. For them it isn't so much of a special effort to continue practicing in that order. [...] Next generation, we ask many, many more questions. There's a lot more "why" – "why am I doing this? What is the reason for this? Why should I participate in this way?" [...] In this country, for us, there's so many external influences. [...] So it is more of a special effort to come here [the Jain Centre]. [...] Here the extent of influence isn't so great; when we go out to eat, it impacts you and then you

⁷³ The photograph was taken by one of the parents of the youth in the picture and I received verbal permission from the children's parents to use the image in this thesis.

start to become flexible in one area, the flexibility grows and grows and grows. (Vijay)

The difference is how to practice Jainism. So, the older generation... a lot of rituals... I call it the “we wanna do everything” rule. [...] They want to do absolutely everything. Whereas I think the younger generation are a bit more chilled out, they're a bit more: “we'll do it – if we don't get a chance, it's fine, it's not gonna harm us,” you know, “we'll watch it, it's nice.” [...] I don't think we have the “we want to do everything” perspective. And I agree with that line of perspective. I think that when you're trying to do everything, there's often a lot of pushing and shoving. (Rushabh)

Discussing the differences between how the older and younger generations of Leicester Jains practice Jainism, Vijay and Rushabh highlighted a few common elements that repeatedly appeared in youth's responses to my prompts for reflection on intergenerational difference in religious practice. When discussing the older generation, Vijay contrasted his impression of (past) Indian or East African environments as places, where religious education focused on memorisation and the social environment was (presumably) more religious, with the social environment of Leicester, which influenced him in ways leading away from engagement with Jainism – by presenting competing “external influences,” increasing his flexibility with regard to Jain behavioural rules, and necessitating him to make “a special effort” to go to the Leicester Jain Centre and engage in religious activities. Vijay also mentioned the fact that younger generations of Leicester Jains questioned their parents and elders as to *why* they were doing particular things. This point was often mentioned by my older interviewees as well (with a mix of remorse for the obedient youth of yesteryears and a hopeful expectation for the knowledgeable Leicester Jains of the future) and is not restricted solely to the context of English Jainism. The youth's questioning of their elders' religious expectations is so pronounced among the Jains living in the USA that the American Jain youth has often been dubbed the ‘why’ generation (Bothra 2016).

Rushabh added a further element to Vijay's exposition on intergenerational difference in religious practice – the different attitudes towards participation in rituals. In addition to their incessant questioning of Jain rituals and doctrines, the Leicester Jain youth were less willing to actively participate in various rituals, which were eagerly performed by their older counterparts – so much so, that Rushabh

jokingly named their attitude towards the performance of rituals as “‘we wanna do everything’ rule” and he substantiated his satirical name by elaborating on the zealous and impatient efforts of older Leicester Jains to participate in a given ritual as quickly as possible. Contrasting the older generation’s eagerness for participation in rituals with the Leicester Jain youth’s relaxed attitude to it, Rushabh gave examples of youth’s readiness to simply observe the rituals in lieu of “pushing and shoving” for a place in the centre of the ritual action.

All of the elements featured in Vijay’s and Rushabh’s responses were echoed by my other young respondents. Collectively they described a form of Jain practice rather different from the practice typically described in introductory texts to Jainism, encountered among Indian Jains, or even practiced by the older Leicester Jains. On the next few pages we will explore their interpretation of Jainism in-depth, yet before we do so, it is worth noting that the term ‘practice’ in my examination does not refer only to rituals and other activities such as *puja*, *samayik*, *aarti*, or *mala* (chanting). Religious practice is delineated more broadly to also encompass the everyday, mundane activities connected to Jainism (e.g., vegetarianism), and the individual systematisations of Jain doctrine, which serve as meaning-making mechanisms for individual Jains. It thus combines explicit religious activities, with more subtle ways Jain teachings are implemented into individuals’ daily lives, and includes a general attitude towards religion and the Jain doctrine that colours an individual’s life.

The Youth’s Jainism

In the analysis of my interviews and conversations with young Leicester Jains seven elements emerged as fundamental themes underpinning the youth’s religious practice and their interpretation of Jainism: (1) the paramount importance they placed on Jain teachings, (2) the rationalised (or ethicised) way they interpreted Jainism, (3) their unabating demand for understanding, (4) their rejection of traditional rituals and temples as the centres of religious activity, (5) their focus on devotion and introspection, (6) their rejection of rigidity in favour of innovation, and (7) their pan-Jain conception of the Jain community. We will now explore each of the above elements individually by looking at excerpts from a focus group I led with nine

Leicester Jains between fifteen and twenty-five years of age and quotations from interviews I conducted with four other Jains below the age of thirty. After examining the youth's conception of Jainism, we will contrast their style of practice with the style of practice they attributed to older Leicester Jains in order to discuss this form of religious innovation present in the community.

1. The paramount importance of Jain teachings

I think when you pull down to the main essence of Jainism [...] I think, for me it's more important to understand and read about what we're meant to do as Jains, rather than learn all the rituals. [...] Because I want to understand why I'm... what the philosophy is. Cause it's only a philosophy, Jainism is only a philosophy. That you try to apply to life. It's dharma, a way of life. (Keval)

All my young informants emphasised the paramount position of Jain teachings and their in-depth understanding – the focus of their Jainism was on Jain teachings and engaging with them in abstract, intellectual, and analytical ways in order to grasp their underlying significance. They explored Jainism with the impetus to discover its essence (manifested either in its teachings, texts, rituals, or its framing of existence in general) and a desire to understand the ‘true meaning of Jainism,’ which they often interpreted along the lines of a soul's self-realisation.

Jainism is not a religion, it's a way of life. It's only called a religion, because I think it needs to be identified in the world as a particular order. [...] I don't think it has a lot of the facets that a religion may have, but more the order that generally a way of life has. (Rushabh)

Striving to understand the fundamental truths of the Jain teachings, the Leicester Jain youth wanted to internalise Jainism and for it to become such an intrinsic part of their being that it would permeate all areas of their lives and not be confined to the religious spaces of the Jain Centre or ritual times set apart from the mundane everyday. Therefore the Jain youth emphasised the utmost importance of implementing the Jain ideals such as non-violence, non-possession, and empathy, into their everyday lives and interactions, and building towards seeing Jainism not as a self-confined sphere of their lives, but an integral part of their existence.

Consequently, they saw Jainism not as a religion, but a way of life, as Rushabh mentioned above.

While we will explore this point in more depth below, it should be mentioned that the understanding of both ‘religion’ and ‘way of life’ was inevitably constructed – and particularly so among the Leicester Jain youth. The older generation of Leicester Jains would often also describe Jainism as a way of life (particularly in relation to its dietary requirements [see *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*]), but what is important here is that the youth contrasted their understanding of Jainism with the older generation’s practice and used the concepts of ‘religion’ and ‘way of life’ to encapsulate this difference.

2. Rationalisation/ethicisation of Jainism

I think my favourite part [of Jainism] is non-violence and tolerance of other people and religions. I think it's more to do with morals as opposed to religion, if that makes sense. (Reena)

I think karma's a really useful way of thinking about... you don't have control over what's happening to you at any point in time and change the path of your future and have control over what you do now. So in that sense, there's a way of reconciling these ideas into a very secular perspective. I think by thinking about, if those things were true, it can help shape how you think about decisions in life. But for me it's all about practice of some of the other principles. I'd say the kind of secular principles in Jainism, so non-violence, non-possessiveness, and anekantavada [plurality of views]. (Ashok)

In addition to emphasising the importance of Jain teachings, the youth also perceived them in more rationalised ways, focusing on parts of Jain doctrine that accentuated Jainism’s ethical dimensions, such as living a non-violent life, demonstrating kindness and compassion to all living beings, showing tolerance to different-minded individuals and groups, leading an environmentally friendly lifestyle, and identifying with one’s soul. These teachings were in a sense viewed as practical advice for better (more ethical) living and not necessarily as religious imperatives.

This focus on Jain ethics gave Ashok, a thirty-something London Jain,⁷⁴ the space to self-identify as a “secular Jain” – someone who adopted Jainism’s ethics, but rejected its metaphysical elements (such as the existence of *karma*, the soul, or *moksha*). Ashok’s pronounced secularism was rare among young Jains (both in London and Leicester), though a selective adoption of Jain teachings was widespread. Embracing Jain ethical ideals, while expressing doubt about Jain cosmology or conceptions of time was anything but uncommon.

3. Demand for understanding

Especially our generation, we won't do anything if we don't know why we're doing it. (Vivek)

The youth’s persistent questioning of their elders about the reasons for performance of certain rituals (like *puja* or *pratikraman*), significance of particular actions (e.g., touching particular spots during *puja*), or even the rationale behind believing in individual doctrines (like the time cycle) was a part of the wider trend among younger Leicester Jains, who wanted to practice Jainism from an informed perspective rather than being told what to do by their parents, grandparents, or other older members of the community. As a continuation of the youth’s desire to grasp the essence of Jain teachings, they refused to practice/believe in something before hearing a satisfactory explanation of its value and demanded to understand the meaning of individual rituals and/or beliefs before committing to practicing or believing in them.

I think understanding for me is more important [than faith]. (Keval)

The youth’s insistence on a personal understanding of the reasons for specific rituals and particular doctrines also revealed a higher level of investment of authority in the individual to determine the merits of an explanation and become the arbiter

⁷⁴ I chose to include Ashok in this description of the Leicester youth’s Jainism despite him being from London because his responses generally fell within the range of the Leicester Jain youth’s style of practice, yet also expressed a more drastic departure from older generation’s Jainism. He represents the tendencies present among Leicester and London Jain youth and the potential direction of the youth’s Jainism’s development in the future.

between ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ elements of Jainism – at least on a personal level. It was in the hands of the individual to not only accept (or not accept) explanations, but to also come up with personal interpretations of doctrines, rituals, and practices. Thus individual young Leicester Jains became the highest religious authorities for their own personal interpretations of Jainism.

4. Rejection of traditional rituals and temples

I don't like the fact that a lot of it revolves around rituals, whereas the actual religion itself is all about... Like bhagwan is not actually there, he's not a real god. He's just someone who's shown us the way. So I don't get why we pray to him and why so much emphasis is put on that. Rather than actual understanding. (Keval)

Not being convinced by their elders' explanations of ritual actions and the rationale for their performance, the Jain youth rejected their importance and opted out of conducting ‘rituals for rituals’ sake.’ With the declining importance of rituals such as *puja* and especially communal rituals of worship such as *snatra puja* (worship of *tirthankars* through recreation of their birth events), the youngsters expressed dissatisfaction with confining their expression of Jainism to a particular time and set of actions, which they perceived as shallow, insignificant, and possibly unfounded, and instead wanted Jainism to be an all-pervading part of their life, even if slightly lightweight as a result.

For me, practice of things I value in Jainism don't require a temple. (Ashok)

In addition to declining to confine Jainism to a particular (ritual) time, the young Jains were also sceptical of confining it to a particular place. Since Jainism was understood to pervade a person's entire life, the youth saw little point in limiting their Jain practice to temples and other centres of religious practice as the only or main places of worship and instead prioritised more mundane environments, such as one's home. Consequently, they came to the Jain Centre less frequently, stayed for a shorter amount of time, and engaged in fewer activities.

5. Focusing on devotion and introspection

I think spirituality is what's the future for Jainism. Cause when I see people do all the rituals and stuff, I don't see the bhav, I don't see the willingness and the motivation and the feeling coming out. I see somebody doing the spiritual aspect of it, just the emotion (like seva [service] or whatever) just the emotions coming out, when they're doing it, it's just incredible just to see. Just to be around. (Vivek)

Although the youth ascribed less importance to the performance of rituals, that does not mean they did not perform rituals altogether. Members of the image-worshipping (Derawasi) branch of Jainism periodically engaged in *puja*, which involves touching particular points of a consecrated *tirthankar*'s statue in order to remind oneself of the qualities exhibited by the *tirthankars* and to awaken one's aspiration to emulate them. Yet while doing so, they did not stress the correct performance of individual actions of the ritual, but instead prioritised one's *bhav* – one's intentions and feelings of devotion during the ritual – focusing more on one's mental state than the visible sequences of ritual activity. This focus on having appropriate internal dispositions instead of performing Jainism in socially (or traditionally) expected ways found its most vivid expression in discussions of rituals, although it also extended to the youth's daily life owing to their insistence on Jainism's all-pervasive role in their lives.

My favourite part [of Jainism] would be the whole introspection, meditation, all that kind of stuff. (Kenil)

Searching for physical expressions of Jainism beyond the traditional rituals, which they saw as inadequate, the youth increasingly emphasised the role and efficacy of meditation in their practice of Jainism. Such practices would typically focus on an individual's *jiv* (the soul, the spirit) and seeing one's *jiv* as not only the most important element of practice, but also the highest religious authority. Since a *jiv* is in its unadulterated essence omniscient, one therefore has direct access to unmediated knowledge, if they simply focus on their *jiv*.

Focusing on one's *jiv*, internalising Jain teachings, and detaching oneself from the hubbub of everyday life were practices encompassed either in stand-alone meditative sessions or in activities associated with the traditional Jain practice of

samayik, a 48-minute introspective ritual revolving around religious learning, devotional chanting/singing, or other types of contemplation bookended by adoption of temporary ascetic vows. While young Leicester Jains might have been slightly sceptical about performing rituals such as *puja*, they welcomed introspective and meditation-like Jain practices such as *samayik*, though they rarely found time to actually perform them.

6. Rejecting rigidity in favour of innovation

I think that is one of my biggest difficulties with any religion – not just Jainism, it's any world religion – is rigidity. You have to try and adapt by the time. There are some things that, yeah, understandably you don't change. [...] But there are other things, where I think "oh, I don't understand what harm that's causing," so I can't understand why you can't change that. (Rushabh)

Due to their rejection of everything that they do not fully understand, the Leicester Jain youth was less likely to accept elements of Jain practice that clashed with their (overwhelmingly) liberal views, such as the secondary position of women in Jain rituals, doctrine, and behavioural practices. For Rushabh, women's unequal position in the traditional interpretation of Jainism – which in Derawasi Jainism prohibits them from saying the ritual texts in the presence of men and what he was referring to in the above quote – presented a big challenge for his view of Jainism and he repeatedly discussed the topic with his parents and Jain ascetics in India. Issues like this one led him to express disapproval of the rigidity he perceived to be guiding these practices and distance himself from their underpinning beliefs.

Beyond disapprovals of such broad and far-reaching positions, similar rejection of rigidity most often expressed itself through dismissals of particular Jain behavioural rules governing individuals' daily lives, most typically in relation to food. Since Jain dietary rules prohibit a striking number of foods⁷⁵ (e.g., meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, root vegetables, bread, butter, and so on), Leicester Jains following all the Jain dietary prohibitions have a difficult time feeding themselves outside their homes. Young Jains therefore found such behavioural rules not only impractical, but

⁷⁵ Explored in the next chapter (*Chapter 5: Changing Continuities*).

often also less important, and even unsubstantiated (as they found the explanations given for such prohibitions lacking) and did not feel obliged to follow them.

With such rejection of traditional behavioural rules and other traditional practices came a call for greater flexibility and customisation of Jainism in new contexts like Leicester. Younger Leicester Jains regularly brought up the subject of ritual gender inequality (i.e., women not being allowed to speak the ritual verses) in conversations with the community's elders and the leadership of the Leicester Jain Centre, though such requests have so far fallen on deaf (albeit perhaps sympathetic) ears. Younger generations of Leicester Jains were also less likely to follow Jain dietary proscriptions beyond the point of vegetarianism (mostly without eggs), though there is a growing support for veganism among Jain youth (although to a lesser extent in England than among American Jains [see Valley 2004]) despite the important role dairy products (e.g., milk or ghee) play in Jain worship and diet. Through various alterations young Leicester Jains thus expressed their support for religious innovation and brought a greater focus upon the individual, one's needs, capabilities, and inherent equality of all living beings.

7. Pan-Jainism

For me Jainism and the Jain way of life has come from the tirthankars and then it's passed down by gurus. So whilst we may refer to a particular guru, the tirthankar should still hold the highest importance. And so that's why I feel like whilst, yeah, you may identify to a particular group, that shouldn't really be of relevance. It's the fact that we're following Lord Mahavir's word in this world. (Rushabh)

Rooted in the youth's focus on Jain ethical dimensions, rejection of rituals, and desire to transcend traditional boundaries of caste and sect was their insistence on a non-sectarian or pan-Jain religious identity, which aspired to rise above the traditional delineations of Derawasi, Sthanakvasi, and Digambar Jainism and unite all Jains into a single community following the Jain teachings. Young Leicester Jains often emphasised similarities between different branches of Jainism – for example, the almost identical content of Derawasi and Sthanakvasi *pratikraman* (ritualised repentance), which differed only in form – and saw intensified fragmentation as a path towards disintegration and eventual demise of the Jain community in England.

Instead, they insisted on seeing everyone as a Jain without a sectarian (or a caste) qualifier, and called for all English Jains to unite into a single community instead of splitting off into ever smaller groups.

‘Spiritual’ and ‘Religious’ Jainism

I first heard the adjective ‘spiritual’ attached to the above-described practice of Jainism at an event in London organised by the Young Jains UK – an organisation composed of and led by Jains predominantly below the age of thirty-five and tentatively connected to the Oswal Association of the UK. The Young Jains UK hold regular smaller events like lectures and meditation or devotional music sessions, as well as organise bigger weekend-long conventions every two years, and it was at their 2016 convention that I encountered many young London Jains who identified themselves as ‘spiritual.’ They juxtaposed their ‘spiritual’ disposition with the ‘religious’ tendencies of the older generation and I therefore want to propose the ‘spiritual’/‘religious’ binary to discuss the particular ways Jainism was interpreted and practiced by the Jain youth, and presented as different from the Jainism of older Jains not only among London Jains, but also for the Leicester Jain youth.

Although the ‘spiritual’ self-identification was widespread among young London Jains, it was not as common in Leicester – perhaps because young Leicester Jains preferred to refrain from adopting a clear nomenclature that would indicate an abrupt break between older and younger generations, or simply (and more likely) that the terminology of ‘spiritual’/‘religious’ was more developed among London Jains, who are numerically stronger and therefore more able to develop a youth subculture within the broader London Jain community. The young London Jains in general represented the same tendencies towards a distinct style of Jain practice as present among the Leicester Jain youth, though they often expressed them in somewhat stronger terms and with slightly clearer arguments. Nevertheless, the youth in Leicester occasionally also used the label ‘spiritual’ when describing themselves and their practices (as evident in Vivek’s quote above), while they reserved the word ‘religious’ for older people or the practices typical of older Leicester Jains. The ‘spiritual’/‘religious’ framework thus has emic roots in Leicester

as well, having emerged from the participants themselves, yet it simultaneously encompasses etic dimensions, as the terminology reflects continuities with the wider societal conceptualisations of ‘religion’ as traditional and community-oriented, and ‘spirituality’ as innovative and individual-oriented (explored below). Nevertheless, the terms take on a specifically Jain dimension in the context of intergenerational change in the Leicester Jain community.

While the Leicester Jain youth generally abstained from directly describing the type of Jainism ascribed to older generations of Leicester Jains, they nevertheless painted a picture of their conception of such ‘religious’ Jainism by presenting it as the opposite of their ‘spiritual’ Jainism. If ‘spiritual’ Jainism was seen along the lines described above, then the ‘religious’ Jainism of older Jains was its antipode. ‘Religious’ Jainism was conceptualised as a temple-centred form of practice, which supported sectarian divisions, maintained the traditional subgroupings of Jains, and was based on frequent and elaborate rituals seen to be performed more out of habit than internal impulses. It focused on memorisation of ritual texts, presumably forgoing the in-depth understanding of their meaning, and was characterised by rigid following of Jain behavioural rules (principally Jain dietary proscriptions such as abstaining from root vegetables and/or not eating after sunset), recognising external holders of religious authority, and generally staunch commitment. The ‘religious’ Jainism of older Leicester Jains was presented by their younger counterparts as a very ritualistic, unreflected, and traditionalist type of practice, which presumably focused more on the external presentation of Jainism and fulfilment of societal expectations of religious practice than on the internal, sincere adherence to Jain teachings.

An Artificial Dichotomy

While the youth’s conceptualisation of ‘religious’ Jainism was to an extent a reflection of the objective dominance of older Leicester Jains in ritual activities and community events (as depicted in the opening vignette), I would in fact argue that both ‘spiritual’ and especially ‘religious’ Jainism were in fact ideal types of Jain practice, where one would struggle to find a Jain that fits neatly into either of the two categories. Young Jains engaged in ‘religiously’ Jain activities and there were visible

elements of ‘spiritual’ Jainism among older Jains as well. Yet although they were abstract, theoretical, and artificial constructs, the contrast between ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism nevertheless represented a conceptual difference operational in the world of contemporary English Jainism and assumed a level of objective reality among young and old Leicester Jains.

The opposition between the two ideal-typical styles of practice espoused by Leicester Jain youth could be interpreted as a strategic positioning of young Jains against an abstract idea of a ‘traditional Jainism’ to help them form their own expressions of Jainism and emphasise the distinctiveness of their interpretation of the tradition. The youth clearly painted an exaggeratedly black-and-white picture of the ‘spiritual’/‘religious’ dichotomy, with the youth’s ‘spiritual’ Jainism seen in distinctly preferable terms and the older generations’ ‘religious’ style of practice understood as somewhat deficient (which is very much in line with the wider conceptions of ‘spirituality’ and ‘religiosity’ discussed below). Their value judgement therefore reflected their own position within the Leicester Jain community and their need to define themselves *against* a ‘traditional’ understanding of Jainism, rather than representing an objective assessment. Furthermore, these ideal-typical representations of ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism functioned not only as designators of different styles of practice, but also as markers of generational division specific to English Jainism and thus an identification with a particular style of practice served also as an expression of generational affiliation and belonging.

It is also worth noting that the distinction between ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism referred primarily to Jain practice and had less to do with Jain beliefs – although beliefs themselves (and particularly their in-depth understanding) took on a greater importance in ‘spiritual’ Jainism, the basic Jain tenets were not contended and may have been only slightly reordered in terms of priority with ethical teachings viewed more favourably than metaphysical ones. What was challenged, however, was how these beliefs should be manifested in practice; for the younger Jains ritual performances and temple attendance were not sufficient (or even adequate) ways to express their religiosity, while they attributed precisely this focus to the older Jains.

A Subjective Turn

The youth's conceptualisation of 'spiritual' and 'religious' Jainism corresponded to wider societal conceptualisations of 'spirituality' and 'religion.' Although 'religion' is a notoriously difficult concept to define (see Idinopulos and Wilson 1998), and 'spirituality' is a slippery notion that evades a simple academic definition (see Vincett and Woodhead 2016), these terms are generally connected to a set of characteristics in colloquial (i.e., non-academic) religious discourse. Brian J. Zimbauer and Kenneth I. Pargament (2005, 24-27) – although approaching the labels 'religiousness' and 'spirituality' from a psychological standpoint – provided a succinct overview of the general sets of connotations associated with each term, which I have summarised below (in visual and narrative forms).



Image 9: 'Religiousness' word cloud (image by the author)

Religiousness is seen as substantive (associated with formal belief, group practice, institutions, rituals, and social expressions of faith), static, institutional, objective (i.e., organised, social, traditional, connected to commitments, formal membership, and organised places of worship), belief-based (understood as dogmatic, theological, institutional, connected to heritage and duty), and generally construed in negative terms (as mundane, out-dated, and a hindrance to the human potential, as well as associated with priests, dogmas, and institutions of a bygone era).

(ibid., 3). The authors mapped these concepts onto the religious field and linked the ‘life-as’ mode with ‘religion’ and ‘subjective-life’ with ‘spirituality’. While Sutcliffe (2006, 307-8) rightly pointed to their lack of a clear definition of ‘spirituality’ (despite its abundant use), Heelas and Woodhead roughly delineated the two spheres with the following definitions: “life-as forms of the sacred [...] emphasize a transcendent source of significance and authority to which individuals must conform at the expense of the cultivation of their unique subject-lives,” and “subjective-life forms of the sacred [...] emphasize inner sources of significance and authority and the cultivation or sacralisation of unique subjective-lives” (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, 6).

I would argue that the application of Heelas and Woodhead’s ‘subjective turn’ would find its utility in our examination of the development of ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ styles of Jain practice as well. If we look at the way the authors defined the ‘life-as’ and ‘subjective-life’ again, we can start to see some similarities between these analytic concepts and the dichotomy proposed above. Heelas and Woodhead (ibid. 3-4) described the ‘life-as’ mode (which parallels ‘religious’ Jainism) as “belonging to an established and ‘given’ orders of things” and characterised by “conformity to external authority.” Conversely, their conception of ‘subjective-life’ (or ‘spiritual’ Jainism) had to do with “authentic connection with the inner depths of one’s unique life-in-relation,” and “states of consciousness, states of mind, memories, emotions, passions, sensations, bodily experiences, dreams, feelings, inner conscience, and sentiments – including moral sentiments like compassion.” Particularly in relation to the ‘spiritual’ Jainism Heelas and Woodhead’s characterisation of ‘subjective-life’ echo the elements explored above. The switch to personal authority among the Leicester Jain youth, their demand for understanding the beliefs and rituals before accepting them, the prominence of introspection as a way of engaging the self (*jiv*) and the divine within, and the emphasis on *bhav* (feelings of devotion and pure intention) during performance of rituals, all speak to a shift towards a more ‘subjective’ way of practicing Jainism among the youth. Furthermore, it is not only what the youth adopted or emphasised in their practice that speaks to the ‘subjective turn’ – it is also what they rejected. Rejecting beliefs that were not based on rational reasoning and instead required faith, rejecting rituals

that did not aid the individual in forming connection to their *jiv* or other beings, rejecting rigidity in practice that was externally imposed, and rejecting socio-political sectarian divisions and groupings again point towards a rejection of the ‘life-as’ form of practice for a more ‘subjective-life’ Jainism.

While the ‘life-as’ and ‘subjective-life’ categories map nicely onto the ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ styles of practice described above, they significantly differ from each other in the fact that Heelas and Woodhead generally found these two forms of relating to the sacred in different domains. They acknowledged that there were individual ‘subjective-life’ elements in the ‘life-as’ domain and vice versa (ibid., 17-23, 31-32), yet characterised individual groups as typically having a dominant mode – thus a church service was predominantly ‘life-as’ and a *reiki* class a predominantly ‘subjective-life’ form. The Leicester Jain community is thus distinct in the fact that both domains coexist within a single community. Admittedly, the ‘life-as’ ‘religious’ Jainism is (perhaps only currently) dominant, as the majority of Jain Centre’s leadership and events are centred around a ‘religious’ style of practice, yet the ‘subjective-life’ or ‘spiritual’ Jainism does not show signs of decline. In fact, as the youth grows older, one can expect to see them taking over the roles currently held by the older generations of Leicester Jains and moulding the Jain Centre and the Jainism practiced within it to suit them and their style of practice, as they speculated themselves:

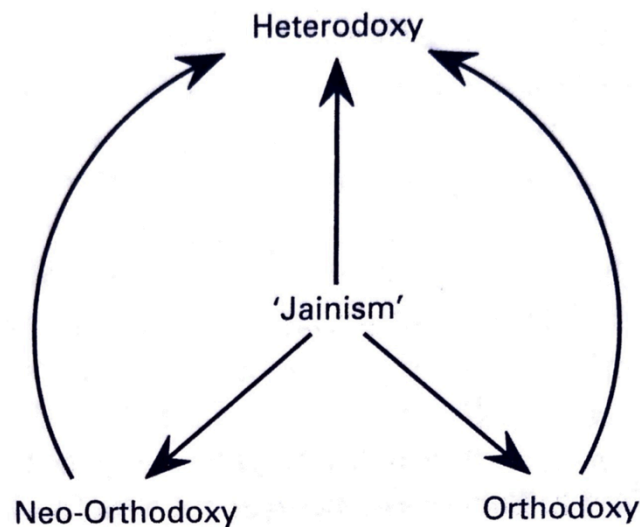
KENIL: Yeah, like in the future, more people won't just do it, cause you have to do it and their parents have been doing it and whatnot. People do it cause you understand the meaning, so you want to do it. Cause if you understand something, you obviously want to do it more, right?

KEVAL: And you feel the importance of it.

“Feeling the importance” of Jain practice and “understanding the meaning” behind it might therefore slowly become the dominant expression of Jainism in Leicester over the coming decades with the power dynamics in the Jain Centre shifting from ‘religious’ Jain individuals to those with a more ‘spiritual’ persuasion.

Ways of Believing in Leicester

Before we delve into an exploration of the complex layers of ‘spiritual’ Jainism, I would like to address the possible roots of the ‘religious’/‘spiritual’ dichotomy. For that we have to travel thirty years back in time to the early 1980s, when Marcus Banks was conducting his study of the Leicester Jains. In the eighth chapter of his *Organizing Jainism in India and England* titled ‘Which Way Forward?: Ways of Believing in Leicester’ (1992, 196-217)⁷⁶ Banks described three tendencies of believing that he identified among Leicester Jains during his fieldwork: orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and neo-orthodoxy.⁷⁷ While emphasising that “these are categories of belief, not believers” and that “any individual may at any one time espouse one or more of the viewpoints” (ibid., 200), Banks illustrated the three tendencies with the following diagram.



**Image 11: Banks’s model of belief tendencies among Leicester Jains
(Banks 1992, 212)**

Orthodoxy in Banks’s work was perceived to be “largely abstract,” as it did not have a base in Leicester and was instead thought to be (by the Leicester Jains) the prevailing type of belief in India and thus influential as an authoritative point of

⁷⁶ As well as in his chapter *Orthodoxy and Dissent* in Carrithers and Humphrey’s edited volume *The Assembly of Listeners* (1991).

⁷⁷ The terms are of his coinage and not used by the Leicester Jains themselves.

reference. The orthodox belief tendency was typically associated with words such as ‘traditional’, ‘old-fashioned’, and ‘narrow-minded’ by Leicester Jains (ibid., 201) and Banks described it as seeing ascetics as paramount, emphasising ritual, espousing an exclusive (or dogmatic) belief structure, and perceiving the aim of religious practice to be the achievement of *moksha* (ibid., 211: *Table 8.1*). Orthodoxy was considered as “traditional Jainism, rooted in sectarianism and ritual,” marked by daily temple visitation, diligent ritual performance, consultations with ascetics, and observation of dietary and behavioural restrictions (ibid., 202). Rituals were performed to foster discipline and conscientiousness and while “stress [was] laid on knowledge, comprehension of that knowledge [was] not really necessary for lay Jains, who can be guided by the ascetics” (ibid.). Yet because orthodoxy was not operational in Leicester, Banks devoted more space to the two other tendencies – neo-orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Neo-orthodox tendency in Leicester manifested itself in claims that Jainism was a “science for the individual in his or her present situation” and not so much a system for achieving liberation (ibid., 207). It was associated with terms such as “‘modern,’ ‘forward-looking,’ ‘broad-minded,’ and, especially, ‘scientific’” (ibid., 201) with Banks describing it as anti-ascetic, emphasising rationality, adopting a selectively exclusive belief structure, and seeing the aim of religion as being the procurement of individual and societal peace (ibid., 211: *Table 8.1*). Neo-orthodoxy rejected traditionalism and sectarian divisions of the orthodox position, ignored ascetics (perceiving them to be narrow-minded and ritualistic), and saw sufficient knowledge and discipline as needing no ascetic guidance and giving everyone (and not just those born into Jain families) the ability for liberation (ibid., 208-209). According to Banks’s experience, most Jains committed to the neo-orthodox viewpoint experienced some kind of a conversion episode of becoming more committed to Jain teachings, as well as having a deeper appreciation for them afterwards (ibid., 209-210). Furthermore, neo-orthodox tendencies seemed to draw inspiration from two particular figures – Shrimad Rajchandra and Chitrabhanu (an ex-ascetic active in the USA) – who both rejected asceticism and emphasised the importance of “adapting Jainism to modern times (or rather, finding in the Jain writings and teachings that

which is best suited to modern times),” the hallmark of neo-orthodox Jainism (ibid., 208).

Heterodoxy was the position adopted by the majority of Leicester Jains most of the time, yet was predominantly “seen in others, or noticed with regret in oneself, if it [was] noticed at all” (ibid., 201). Banks described it as pro-ascetic, focused on faith, encompassing an inclusive (or eclectic) belief structure, and marked by a religious practice aimed at pleasing God (ibid., 211: *Table 8.1*). In fact it was the belief in a supreme God or an adoption of a theistic outlook that was one of the key features of heterodox Jainism – either in the form of a belief in the power of *tirthankars* to aid a supplicant, seeing the *tirthankars* as the paramount deity expressing itself through a series of avatars, or feeling that a paramount, controlling, and creating deity lay behind all the *tirthankars* (ibid., 203-205). Such a theistic outlook brought with it a shift in focus of religious practice from aiming at achieving liberation to instead pleasing God with an emphasis on *bhakti* (devotion). Since *bhakti* could also be found in Leicester’s Hindu temples, many of the Leicester Jains occasionally (or even frequently) visited them and many had images of individual Hindu deities in their home shrines as well (ibid., 205-206). Banks also stated that those who espoused a heterodox viewpoint often “bemoaned their ignorance of ‘deep philosophy’ but felt that if sufficient knowledge were acquired, a devotion to ‘true’ (orthodox) Jainism was bound to result” (ibid., 207). Since heterodox Leicester Jainism was eclectic and syncretistic by nature, it also encompassed features of the other two tendencies – as represented by the two rounded arrows feeding orthodox and neo-orthodox tendencies into heterodoxy in the above model – or as Banks (ibid., 212) described it: “an abstract ‘Jainism’ gives rise to orthodox, heterodox, and neo-orthodox interpretations, and, in turn, the orthodox and neo-orthodox interpretations can give rise to further heterodox interpretations.”

Whereas Banks’s analysis and the construction of his model of belief tendencies occurred primarily in the 1980s, certain shifts have occurred in the Leicester Jain community in the intervening decades that make it difficult to translate his orthodox, neo-orthodox, and heterodox tendencies into contemporary Jain practice. While Banks’s model was a useful tool for my initial approach to religious understanding among the Leicester Jains, the passing of time and the institutionalisation of religious

transmission (for children and adults) in the Leicester Jain community resulted in a changed Leicester Jainism, one that did not exhibit the same belief tendencies as at the time of Banks's fieldwork. Most notably, writing about Leicester Jainism in the early 1980s, Banks noted that orthodoxy did not exist in Leicester and that in effect only the heterodox and neo-orthodox tendencies could be encountered (ibid., 201, 210). During my own fieldwork in the mid-2010s I came across what could arguably be styles of Jain practice that arose from Banks's 'orthodox' and 'neo-orthodox' belief tendencies, while I did not encounter a 'heterodox' viewpoint.

The similarities, nevertheless, are visible: the Jainism identified as 'religious' could be seen as a variation of the 'orthodox' viewpoint described by Banks, while 'spiritual' Jainism could be interpreted as a continuation of the 'neo-orthodox' tendency from three decades earlier. Yet the two pairs are not completely the same. While we may see similarities between them and label them as developments of each other, I would argue they do not stem from the same source, and evidence of this can be found in the examination of *who* espouses the above belief tendencies. According to Banks (ibid., 200), most Leicester Jains uttered phrases connected with any one of the tendencies and were thus a mixed grouping of Jains holding orthodox, heterodox, and neo-orthodox viewpoints. During my fieldwork, however, the divisions between 'religious' and 'spiritual' Jainism were mostly generational – the older generation leaned more towards a 'religious' Jainism (similar to Banks's 'orthodox' tendency), while the Leicester Jain youth embraced a 'spiritual' style of Jainism (Banks's 'neo-orthodoxy').

On the other hand, the 'heterodox' tendency – described by Banks as the prevailing *modus operandi* of Leicester Jains in early 1980s – was largely non-existent during my fieldwork. While some individuals did visit Hindu temples, they did so rarely, and I did not encounter any Leicester Jains who espoused a theistic outlook on divinity, which Banks portrayed as the key feature of 'heterodox' Jainism. I would argue that the reason for disappearance of such a sizeable belief tendency was not only the passing of time between Banks's fieldwork and my own, but primarily the establishment of the Minister of Religion position (explored further in *Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*). Especially under the fifteen-year-long tutelage of Jayeshbhai, the Leicester Jains started to learn more about the

performance of Jain rituals, the intricacies of Jain doctrine, and the ways of implementing Jain teachings in everyday life. In effect, the Leicester Jains started to learn more about an ‘orthodox’ interpretation of Jainism (which was nevertheless affected by the absence of ascetics), and adopting its features. And as Banks predicted when writing that those espousing ‘heterodox’ beliefs “felt that if sufficient knowledge were acquired, a devotion to ‘true’ (orthodox) Jainism was bound to result” (ibid., 207), the majority of Leicester Jains transitioned from ‘heterodox’ to ‘orthodox’ viewpoints. Jayeshbhai’s arrival therefore marked the arrival of a more ‘orthodox’ Jainism, which later bifurcated into the ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism discussed in this thesis.

In general, while Banks’s ‘orthodox’ Jainism emerged out of the demise of ‘heterodox’ Jainism, we can spot more correlations between ‘neo-orthodox’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism – particularly in relation to some of its elements (e.g., rejecting traditionalism, sectarian divisions, and ascetics, while emphasising knowledge, adapting Jainism to modern times, and equating Jainism with ‘science’) and the influence of authority figures such as Shrimad Rajchandra (and Rakeshbhai Zaveri) on the belief tendencies ascribed to these groups. It could be speculated that the ‘neo-orthodox’ position previously espoused by the Jain Centre’s leadership and the so-called ‘elders’ (ibid., 171-172) seeped into the interpretations of younger generations through the grandparent–grandchildren transmission of religious knowledge (as discussed in *Chapter 3*, the children’s parents did not have as much of an influence on their children’s religious knowledge) and thus still remains present in contemporary Leicester Jainism, although in a ‘spiritual’ guise.

Yet it could be equally true that the ‘spiritual’ Jainism emerged of its own accord and did not stem from the ‘neo-orthodox’ views of the earlier generations. Here we bump into potentially the biggest obstacle of trying to establish historical trends of belief tendencies and religious change in the Leicester Jain community – there has been a gap in research on Leicester Jains between Banks’s work (in the early 1980s) and my own (in the mid-2010s) and this vacuum in scholarship destines any connections I attempt to draw between the Jainism described by Banks and the one encountered by me to be speculative. Nevertheless, I would argue that the

connection between ‘neo-orthodoxy’ and ‘spiritual’ Jainism is likely, even if tenuous, and that further research should provide us with more detailed speculations.

Exploring the ‘Spiritual’

Having looked at the analytical components of the ‘religious’/‘spiritual’ dichotomy, its properties, and its potential historical developments, we now return to a more data-driven exploration of the experiences surrounding ‘spiritual’ Jainism. The complexities of ‘spiritual’ Jainism’s many layers will be examined through three lenses – the role of language in youth’s religiosity, the structure of the children’s religious education, and the importance of socio-geographical location for religious practice. By looking at these three layers of ‘spiritual’ Jain practice, we will delve deeper into the diasporic experience of young Leicester Jains and how it impacts their expression of Jainism.

In Between Languages

Let us briefly return to London to explore another layer of the ‘spiritual’/‘religious’ dichotomy, that of language. In my conversations with young London Jains, the label ‘religious’ was often substituted with the Gujarati word *kriya*. In Gujarati⁷⁸ *kriyā* (ક્રિયા) can be translated as action, rite, process, religious ceremony, practice, or a method of doing something, but in the context of Jainism it broadly refers to any ritual, ritual action, or activity with an established structure, where one must follow the prescribed steps and say the accompanying verses without much variation – the typical examples of which are the common rituals of *samayik* (contemplative session), *pratikraman* (ritualised repentance), *puja* (worship of an image), or *aarti* (offering of lights). Given the youth’s understanding of ‘religious’ Jainism as being ritual-centred, the label *kriya* worked to emphasise its focus on rituals and was charged with the disapproving perception of the older generation performing actions

⁷⁸ Gujarati Lexicon. “Dictionary – Gujarati To English: ક્રિયા”. Accessed 7th July 2018. http://gujaratilexicon.com/dictionary/gujarati-to-english/ક્રિયા*/. See also Cort 2001, 127.

and rituals without being aware of their meaning, performing them simply because ‘that is how it is done.’

Furthermore, the use of the word *kriya* in reference to older Jains added a linguistic layer to the intergenerational difference discussed in religio-practical terms above. As already made clear, the vast majority of Leicester (and more broadly English) Jains trace their origin to the Indian state of Gujarat, where the language of everyday interaction is Gujarati. The older generation of Jains continue to use Gujarati for their day-to-day conversations in Leicester, though with each subsequent generation English has gained more prominence in people’s parlance, culminating in the almost exclusive use of English by the Leicester Jain youth in their daily interactions. One of the most obvious outcomes of migration was therefore the linguistic tension between Gujarati-speaking older generations of Leicester Jains and the English-preferring youth – as the younger generations have grown up in an English-speaking environment and have generally had fewer interactions with Gujarati speakers, they were less agile users of the language and struggled to discuss advanced religious topics in Gujarati.

Such an intergenerational shift in language abilities and preferences is not unusual among diasporic groups. As Zhu Hua (2010, 191) writes: “many adults from East and South Asia in the UK regard English as the ‘they-code’ and prefer to use their ethnic community languages [...] for family interaction, while their British-born children consider English as a ‘we-code’ and prefer it to their ethnic languages.” That is largely due to the fact that the children (and younger generations in general) tend to absorb the ‘host’ or ‘dominant language’ (see Jaspal and Coyle 2010) of English faster and with greater ease (see Schecter and Bayley 1997, Wong-Fillmore 1991), thus resulting in discrepancies in language abilities of different generations. Jaine Beswick (2013, 137) even wrote that in migration contexts the language shift from the ‘heritage language’ to ‘host’ or ‘dominant’ language frequently occurs within three generations, as language maintenance is often not possible or desired in diasporic environments. Beswick’s three-generational shift can certainly be applied to the Leicester Jains: the general use of Gujarati in most contexts by the older (‘first’) generation Jains gave way to the functional distribution of Gujarati in the home and English outside the home in the ‘second’ (‘sandwich’ or

‘parent’) generation, and resulted in the domination of English in most contexts for the youth.

Yet in the context of diaspora, a ‘heritage language’ is often more than simply a pragmatic tool of interpersonal communication and can grant groups sociocultural identification – connected chiefly to ethnic identification (see Brubaker 2013, Jaspal and Coyle 2010, Safran 2008) – as well as uphold a sense of legitimacy and authenticity of the linguistic group within an alien diasporic environment. Within the Leicester Jain community the ‘heritage language’ had the additional function of being the primary medium of adult transmission of religious knowledge and as younger Leicester Jains emerged from *pathshala* (children’s religious education) – which was conducted exclusively in English – they faced difficulties with accessing the knowledge communicated in lectures or sermons (*vyakhyans*), books, adult religious classes, or even by the older (and more knowledgeable) members of the community, since they all used Gujarati as their primary medium.

Although the Leicester Jain youth learnt the basic grammar and vocabulary of Gujarati in tandem with the weekly *pathshala* (as well as from their family members at home), they tended to use it only when interacting with their elderly relatives or older members of the Jain community. With the use of Gujarati limited to domestic contexts and sporadic uses, the youth did not develop a high enough mastery of the language to discuss doctrinal intricacies and nuanced religious interpretations with either Jayeshbhai (the Centre’s religious specialist) or other knowledgeable older Leicester Jains, or read the predominantly Gujarati books available in the library of the Leicester Jain Centre. The struggle to understand Gujarati, when most of Jain literature and religious lectures are in Gujarati, resulted in a “language problem” for the English-speaking Jain youth of Leicester, as Keval, a man in his twenties, noted:

But I mean that's also the problem. If the old people with all the knowledge can't speak English and the young people with no knowledge that want to learn can't speak Gujarati, then there's a clash. If you really want to know, you've got to make an effort. Or we're gonna have to have someone, who can try to explain a bit more.

In my interactions with the Leicester Jain youth I have often come across some variation of Keval’s words and the difficulties that mostly English-speaking Jain

youth encountered when they wanted to interact with more knowledgeable members of the Jain community, who were predominantly Gujarati-speaking. The linguistic barrier prevented them from tapping into the rich source of knowledge available in the Leicester Jain Centre's library, in its religious leader Jayeshbhai, or other prominent members of their community. It consequently also worked to distance the Jain youth from knowledgeable (chiefly older) fellow-Jains that could otherwise act as external sources of religious authority and further cemented the idea that the individual is the ultimate holder of personal religious authority.

The division between older and younger Leicester Jains was thus not only one of religious style, but also one of language, where 'religious' Jainism was practiced chiefly by Gujarati-speaking older Jains, and 'spiritual' Jainism by primarily younger Jains, who have been born and brought up in England and used English as a primary medium of communication. The Gujarati term '*kriya*' used as the opposite of the English term 'spirituality' therefore emphasised the linguistic layer of the intergenerational division in the English Jain community and connected the generational strand of religious innovation with the socio-geographical one.

Since more knowledgeable (and, as a rule, older) members of the Leicester Jain community were thus inaccessible to the Jain youth due to a linguistic barrier, an additional channel of intergenerational (or 'vertical') religious transmission lost its role. With the youth's parents transmitting only limited amounts of religious knowledge (due to their own insufficient religious education in their childhood) and the older members in their family and community being less easily accessible to the youth due to the linguistic barrier, the Leicester Jain youth were left with three main sources of religious knowledge: the *pathshala*, other young Jains, and the Internet.⁷⁹ That, of course, does not mean that the youth's parents, grandparents, and older family/community members did not transmit religious knowledge or have a meaningful contribution to the youth's religiosity, but it does indicate a shift in influence from 'vertical' to 'horizontal' religious transmission.

⁷⁹ Although there are some (non-academic) books on Jainism written in English, the youth generally identified the Internet as their main external source of information on Jainism. The content available online can be counted as acting primarily in the 'horizontal' transmission sphere – while certain webpages endorsed by individually recognised authority figures (e.g., the webpage of the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission [Dharampur]) fall under 'oblique' transmission, most of the resources on the Internet are in fact examples of 'horizontal' transmission.

Before we discuss *pathshala* and the accompanying ‘horizontal’ transmission among peers in detail below, I want to briefly touch on the role of the Internet as a vehicle of religious transmission (see Vekemans 2014, 2015). Among the youth the Internet came to represent one of the most important external sources of information on Jainism. With the myriad of diverse information available online, the individual young Leicester Jains had to discern between ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ facts about Jainism, again reinforcing the personal religious authority characteristic of ‘spiritual’ Jainism. With less religious authority invested in external as well as ‘vertical’ transmitters of religious knowledge and practice, the emphasis on personal religious authority also gave the Leicester Jain youth the space to be more flexible in their interpretation of Jainism as well as the freedom to innovate in their practice.

Development of Children’s Religious Education in Leicester

While in India the transmission of religious knowledge to new generations takes place through several channels (i.e., parents, older family members, *pathshala* teachers, visiting ascetics, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, etc.), in the post-migration Leicester Jain community the variety of channels of religious transmission shrunk and shifted in importance. Indirect transmission (through neighbours, acquaintances, and to a certain extent even friends) became almost non-existent and the role of parents and older family members lost some of its importance, as the amount of knowledge they were able to transmit to the children decreased due to their chronological distance from sources of Jain knowledge in India. The major channel of transmission of religious knowledge in Leicester thus became the children’s religious education, better known as *pathshala*.

The Leicester Jain community went through several iterations of the *pathshala*, from improvised lessons at members’ homes during the initial stages of community formation (see Banks 1992, 161, 185-6), through structured *pathshala* classes in the Jain Centre modelled after the *pathshala* classes held in Indian *upashrays* (the ‘traditional *pathshala*’), to today’s interactive lessons compiled by Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur) that were introduced a few years before my fieldwork (the ‘new *pathshala*’).

The 'Traditional Pathshala'

In Indian cities with traditional Jain presence (such as Jamnagar, Gujarat) the children's religious education is typically held daily at several locations around the city. *Pathshala* classes take place in *upashrays* (ascetic shelters) or in designated structures in the vicinity of Jain temples and are led by knowledgeable laypeople living close by. *Pathshala* teachers are well versed in the ritual texts indispensable to a practicing lay Jain and would instruct the local children in memorisation of *mantras* and ritual texts necessary for daily practice.

In a typical *pathshala* class children of varying ages (usually between five and twelve) would gather on the floor around the *pathshala* teacher, each with their own book of ritual texts and a small wooden book-stand (to prevent the book from touching the floor and thus inadvertently disrespecting the knowledge held within it). The class would then simply consist of children individually repeating the verses they were learning on that day, which depended on their age and how much they have already memorised. When a child had successfully memorised the verses allocated to them, they would repeat them to the teacher, who would correct any mistakes they might have made and then either tell them to work on it some more, or allocate the next verse or two by slowly saying the verses in order for the child to hear the correct pronunciation of the words. Then the child would go back to their spot and work on memorising the new verses and integrating them with the lines already memorised. In such a way the *pathshala* classes in India were able to integrate children of varying ages into a single class and transmit religious knowledge independently of day-to-day attendance of individual children or at what age they began attending the *pathshala*.

While these *pathshala* classes were occasionally devoted to or included segments where particular Jain stories were explained, the transmission of religious narratives, individual doctrines, and the meaning of rituals were typically left to the children's parents and older family members (with more complex issues being taken to the Jain ascetics traveling through the area). Parents and grandparents regularly took children to perform worship alongside them, told them stories about important figures in Jain history, and answered the children's questions about Jain belief and practice. They also modeled Jain behaviour in their daily lives by, for example, not

eating certain foods, giving alms to visiting ascetics, or regularly performing smaller ritual acts. In such a context the *pathshala* was, therefore, only one of the vehicles for religious transmission – one that had a clear purpose (i.e., memorisation of ritual texts) and worked alongside the transmission undertaken by parents and older family members.

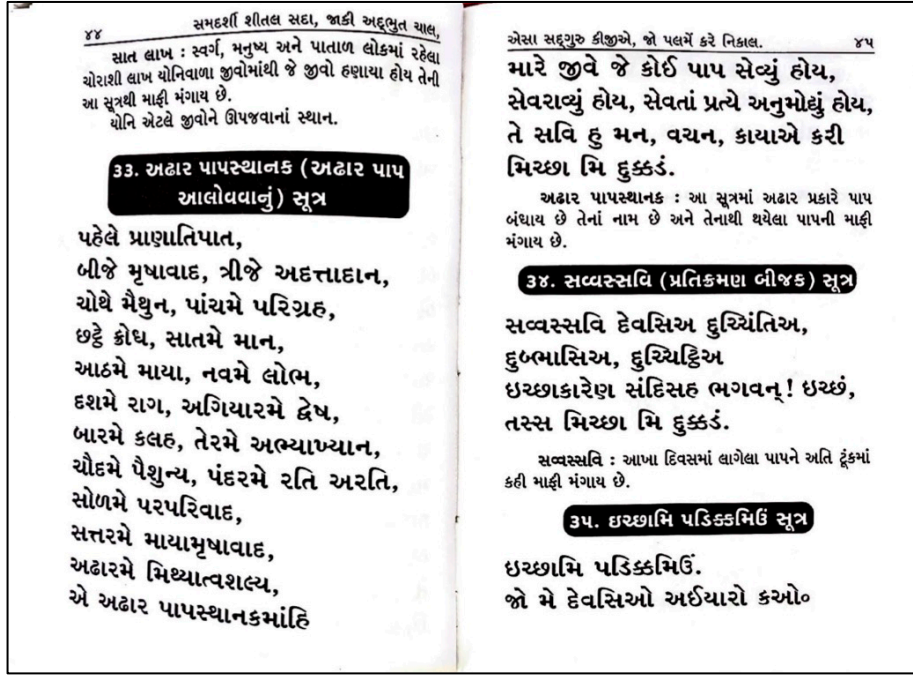


Image 12: 'Traditional *pathshala*' materials in Gujarati (image by the author)⁸⁰

Such a *pathshala* was also what ancestors of Leicester Jains would have experienced in Gujarat prior to their migration abroad and the only kind of children's religious education they and their families would have been familiar with. Being the only model of structured transmission of religious knowledge to children available in Jain practice, the Jains carried the 'traditional *pathshala*' onward to Leicester and established a similar *pathshala* soon after their arrival in the mid-1970s, where they started teaching various religious texts to groups of children that assembled once a week in people's homes. After the rupture within the Jain Samaj between the Shrimalis and the Oswals in 1977 (detailed in *Chapter 1*), the weekly *pathshala* was temporarily halted and did not resume until a few years later, after the purchase of the Jain Centre (Banks, 1992, 185-9), thus leaving a number of children without a

⁸⁰ *Śrī Pañca Pratikramaṇādi Sūtro*. Jain Prakāśana Maṇḍir, Amadāvāda, 2014.

formal channel of religious transmission altogether (as explored in the previous chapter, *Historical Trajectory*). With the acquisition of the disused church on Oxford Street and its eventual transformation into the Leicester Jain Centre, the *pathshala* moved from individuals' homes to the Jain Centre, though it remained largely structured around the decontextualized memorisation of the 'traditional *pathshala*' until 2011.

The 'traditional *pathshala*' held in Leicester was, of course, different from the one held in Gujarat – instead of daily, it was held only on Sundays, and the teachers instructing the children were often selected based on their willingness to devote time to religious instruction and not necessarily on their mastery of ritual texts.⁸¹ Such a 'traditional *pathshala*' held in Leicester was on the whole not very successful – Leicester Jains who went through the 'traditional *pathshala*' often characterised their religious education as ineffective, said they forgot many of the things learnt or that they did not learn much at all, and generally expressed favourable views of the 'new *pathshala*' in place today. They appreciated its more holistic approach, which did not focus only on the context-less memorisation of ritual texts, but instead revolved around explanations of Jain doctrines, practices, and narratives, thus providing the children with a fuller education in Jainism.

I would argue that the unsuccessfulness of the 'traditional *pathshala*' in Leicester was primarily due to the lack of religious knowledge and experience of children's parents and grandparents, which might be further linked to the absence of Jain ascetics in Leicester and earlier in East Africa. The 'traditional *pathshala*' in India relied heavily on older family members of the children to transmit wider religious knowledge, while in Leicester the *pathshala* in its traditional form functioned largely on its own as the vehicle of religious transmission. Without the proximity of knowledgeable and experienced relatives, who could provide additional and contextualised knowledge, the children had little religious context in which to situate the memorised texts and quickly forgot them. The same was true for mid-20th century East Africa, where the few *pathshalas* that existed were invariably modelled

⁸¹ During the early stages of community formation, *pathshala* was taught by a woman who admitted that she often had to learn the verses herself a few days before teaching them to the children.

after the Indian ‘traditional *pathshala*.’ Bharatbhai’s story of growing up in East Africa recounted in the previous chapter (*Historical Trajectory*) demonstrates this:

Well, we had a pathshala, but, hum, the teacher used to just give us some lessons to cram all the prayers and all that – stotras and all. But not very deep knowledge in Jainism, you know. The basic, we don't know anything about it.

Like the Jain children going to ‘traditional *pathshala*’ in Leicester, Bharatbhai experienced the same context-less transmission of religious texts in East Africa, one that lacked a more holistic exploration of Jainism. And while knowledgeable and religiously experienced relatives might have been slightly more accessible in East Africa, the absence of Jain ascetics, sparse religious community, and only occasional religious events did not make a substantial enough contribution to the continuation of religious knowledge for the Jains who resided in East Africa and for their offspring, who now live in Leicester. With the growing chronological distance from India, the command of religious knowledge decreased through the generations, and the ‘traditional *pathshala*’ grew ever more in need of reform. That came with the tenure of Kalpitbhai Doshi as president of the Jain Centre in 2006–2007, who introduced the *pathshala* structure and materials constructed and promoted by the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur), which became known as the ‘new *pathshala*’ among the Leicester Jains.

The ‘New Pathshala’

The Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur) – or SRM, for short – is a Jain religious organisation led by Rakeshbhai Zaveri located in Dharampur, Gujarat. Promoting an interpretation of Jainism based on the writings of Shrimad Rajchandra (1867–1901; see Dundas 2002, 262–265), they have been able to attract a small, but substantial following (which also includes a few families in Leicester), and have been promoting their brand of Jainism through charitable work, international speaking engagements, and educational materials for children as well as adults.

The SRM’s children’s religious education called ‘Divinetouch’ is divided into three levels: the ‘Magictouch’ (for four to eight year-old children), the ‘Arhat Touch’

(for nine to twelve year-olds), and the ‘Spiritualtouch’ (for teenagers between thirteen and sixteen year of age, or after their completion of the ‘Arhat Touch’ stage). In Leicester the *pathshala*-going children (typically between four and thirteen years old) were divided into three groups – the Magictouch, the younger Arhat Touch (for those between ten and eleven), and the older Arhat Touch (for the twelve to fourteen-year-olds) – and attended *pathshala* classes (along with Gujarati language classes of equivalent level⁸²) every Sunday during term time in the Jain Centre. Until 2016 only ‘Magictouch’ and ‘Arhat Touch’ were operational in Leicester, though in mid-2016 Kalpitbhai Doshi started a pilot ‘Spiritualtouch’ class at his home for a smaller group of teenagers with the aspiration to later incorporate it into the Jain Centre’s *pathshala* structure, if it proved popular and successful enough.

The ‘new *pathshala*’ had been well received in the Leicester Jain community and the children who have gone through the ‘new *pathshala*’ system of religious education were perceived to be more knowledgeable than their ‘traditional *pathshala*’ counterparts. That was largely due to the fact that the ‘new *pathshala*’ provided a much more comprehensive education about Jainism and in effect combined the previously diversified channels of religious transmission – parents, older relatives, and the ‘traditional *pathshala*’ – and instead of focusing solely on the memorisation of ritual texts, taught the children about Jain doctrine, rituals, daily practices, stories, and important figures as well. Thus it ensured a uniform transmission of religious knowledge that was not dependent on the command of Jainism possessed by the children’s family members, and that could be equally distributed to all the children in the community. Since the knowledge of Jainism has been slowly decreasing through the Jains’ time in East Africa and Leicester, the ‘new *pathshala*’ bypassed the lack of knowledge of children’s parents and instead aimed to teach the new generation of Leicester Jains the basics of everything they needed to know as lay Jains.

During my fieldwork the Sunday *pathshalas* were held in three different rooms around the Jain Centre, each for a different age group and each led by one or two

⁸² Since the very beginning, the Leicester *pathshalas* were organised alongside language classes, where children learnt the grammar and vocabulary of Gujarati. These language classes have progressively grown in importance, as families have slowly become bilingual and/or started using English in their homes, thus exposing their children to less and less Gujarati.

teachers in charge of the class. When I went along to the ‘Magictouch’ *pathshala* for the youngest children, I was encouraged to participate in their activities, which included me dancing with the children to a song about expressing respect to Mahavir-swami and all living beings, as well as being handed a cut-out puppet of Chandanbala⁸³ and acting out her story with the other teachers. While my visits to the ‘Arhat Touch’ groups were not as active, I nevertheless participated in some fun activities – being blindfolded and guided around the Jain Centre’s library to communicate the concept of faith, learning about the Bhaktambar *stotra*, or helping children to fill out one of various worksheets they kept in their folders (such as the one below).

1 - 10 Revision

Instructions: Tick the correct option.

1. Rushabhdev Bhagwan's father's name:


☐ Nabhiraja


☐ Ravjibhai


☐ Siddhartharaja

5. Who did Rushabhdev Bhagwan's parna


☐ Ambalabhai


☐ Gautamswami


☐ Shreyance kumar

2. Rushabhdev Bhagwan's mother's name:


☐ Devba


☐ Trishlamata


☐ Marudevimata

6. I am a wish-fulfilling tree


☐ Kalpavruksh


☐ Apple Tree


☐ Orange Tree

3. Rushabhdev Bhagwan had _____ sons:

100 sons
☐ 100 sons

1 son
☐ 1 son

10 sons
☐ 10 sons

7. We are born as twins


☐ Dwarfs


☐ Angels


☐ Yugliks

4. Rushabhdev Bhagwan did his parna with


☐ Apple Juice


☐ Sugarcane Juice


☐ Watermelon Juice

8. Rushabhdev Bhagwan attained Supreme KNOWLEDGE

Diksha
☐ Diksha

Keval gnan
☐ Kevalgnan

Seva
☐ Seva

Take it home: Today your child enjoyed enacting the stories of Rushabhdev Bhagwan's life that he/she has learnt during this term. Encourage him/her to share his favourite story with you.

Image 13: 'New *pathshala*' materials (image by the author)⁸⁴

As these details from *pathshala* classes demonstrate, the SRM's 'new *pathshala*' utilised a more interactive teaching style and was based on storytelling, doctrine

⁸³ Candanbālā was a woman who appeared at a key point in Mahavir-swami's life and then became the head nun under him. Her story is well known among Jains and serves as an example of religious ideals and virtues. See Kelting 2007, 2009.

⁸⁴ Shrimad Rajchandra Magictouch. Date unknown. *Term V, Lesson Plan no. 10. Topic: Revision and The Story of King Bharat*. Mumbai: Shrimad Rajchandra Educational Trust.

explanation, and philosophical explorations, rather than emphasising the memorisation of ritual texts. Though *mantras*, *sutras*, and other ritual texts played an important role in the ‘new *pathshala*’ and were explained to older children in ‘Arhat Touch’ (and children were encouraged to memorise them), their memorisation was not of central importance, as was the case in ‘traditional *pathshala*’. This stance was also evident from SRM’s descriptions of ‘Magictouch’ and ‘Arhat Touch’ on the official website of the ‘Divinetouch’ programme.

“[During Magictouch lessons] the children are introduced to the lives of Spiritual Masters and great personalities belonging to various religious traditions the world over, using fun-filled interactions and innovative, captivating teaching techniques like audio-visuals, skits, puppet shows, worksheets, creativity, quizzes, animations and PowerPoint presentations.”⁸⁵

“Arhat Touch is a worldwide chain of classes that aims at reviving interest and participation in the Jain religious tradition and promoting a deeper and more meaningful insight into Jain philosophy. [...] The mission of the Arhat Touch programme is to create the necessary curriculum and environment for children across the world to learn and internalise the rich culture of Jainism in a scientific, practical and enjoyable manner.”⁸⁶

While the activities undertaken during *pathshala* classes in Leicester might not have been as “fun-filled” or “captivating” as the creators of the programme predicted or might hope for, they were certainly more engaging than the activities typically undertaken at ‘traditional *pathshala*’ classes, such as recitation and memorisation. Instead of those, ‘new *pathshala*’ classes were guided by colourful PowerPoints, structured around pre-made talks and dialogues, and infused with worksheets, collectable *tirthankar* cards, and playful activities.

The second of the above quotes also shows clear parallels between the ‘new *pathshala*’ and the ‘spiritual’ Jainism of the youth explored above. The SRM’s vision of “promoting a deeper and more meaningful insight into Jain philosophy” resonates with the youth’s insistence on understanding individual doctrines and

⁸⁵ Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, Dharampur. “Magictouch”. 2017.

<http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/sr-divinetouch/magictouch-299.htm>.

⁸⁶ Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, Dharampur. “Arhat Touch”. 2017.

(<http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/sr-divinetouch/arhat-touch-300.htm>).

rituals before adopting them, as well as the higher importance they ascribed to Jain teachings, and the way they often saw Jainism as a philosophy (like Keval said above, when discussing the importance of Jain teachings). The doctrine-centred version of Jainism worked in tandem with the SRM's transmission of Jainism in "a scientific, practical and enjoyable manner" – the implementation into daily life ("practical") alongside selective adoption and rational explanation of Jain beliefs ("scientific") – to reinforce the 'spiritual' tendencies of the youth.

Srimad Rajchandra's interpretation of Jainism (particularly the one promoted by SRM) also emphasises the focus on one's soul and understanding of Jain ethical teachings, while putting less emphasis on rituals, temple visitation, and sectarian affiliation (see Selter 2002). Various Srimad Rajchantra inspired groups have been gaining more popularity and currency in Jain communities across England and India, and generally attracting a younger and more gender-balanced audience.⁸⁷ Their brand of Jainism based on individual self-realisation, regular lectures focused on implementation of Jain teachings in daily life, meditation, and charity has had a disproportionate effect in the Leicester Jain community as well, where less than fifty individuals would otherwise espouse affiliation to the Srimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur) group. Kalpitbhai Doshi – who initiated the *pathshala* reform resulting in the adoption of SRM *pathshala* materials – was a prominent and devout follower of Srimad Rajchandra and Rakeshbhai Zaveri (the leader of the Dharampur Mission), who was also active in the Leicester Jain Centre. The small group of Zaveri's followers also succeeded in organising a visiting lecture by Zaveri in the Leicester Jain Centre during my fieldwork, which attracted more than two hundred people. Several of the most vocal youth were also sympathetic to the view of Jainism espoused by the SRM – for example, brothers Vivek and Kenil attended fortnightly events organised by a youth SRM group in London, where they listened to video recordings of Zaveri's lectures and discussed them with other youngsters.

Thus it was not only the 'new *pathshala*' (which has only been running for roughly five years at the time of my fieldwork) that influenced the development of the youth's style of Jain practice, but also the youth's peers, who have either been

⁸⁷ As opposed to the older and predominantly female attendees at Jain Centre's monthly *satsangs* and other events. The same was true in Jamnagar as well.

exposed to Srimad Rajchandra's interpretation of Jainism or have developed more 'spiritual' Jain views on their own. The peer interaction and 'horizontal' transmission that sprung alongside the 'new *pathshala*' were also important channels of religious transmission among Leicester Jain youth. It is worth noting that the Leicester Jain community (especially the Jains connected to the Jain Centre) is largely composed of people who share family ties. Two extended families – the Mehtas and the Shahs – represented a big proportion of regular attendees at the Jain Centre and thus many Leicester Jain youngsters often socialised with their cousins outside the Jain Centre as well. In that way the 'horizontal' transmission among peers was a particularly potent vehicle for transmission of views and practices that formed the 'spiritual' Jainism of the youth.

Contrasting Socio-Geographical Locations

Generally implicit in the discussion of Leicester Jain youth's practice of Jainism so far is the notion that a 'spiritual' Jainism is specific to the English – or more broadly diasporic – context and could not (or rather, does not) occur in traditionally Jain environments in Gujarat. While my own analysis of the two environments of Leicester and Jamnagar will take place in *Chapter 6 (Echoes from India)*, I want to examine the Leicester Jain youth's view of the two locations at this point, as it offers additional insights into the 'religious'/'spiritual' dichotomy discussed above. Such an exploration will also emphasise the fact that religious practice is always situated within a socio-geographical context, which influences the practice itself. This enmeshment of location and religious practice works alongside generational transformations in interpretation of Jainism to create the particular type of religious innovation found in the Leicester Jain community.

Many Leicester Jains regularly travelled to Gujarat – typically as a family unit to either visit relatives or go on pilgrimage. The vast majority of young Leicester Jains have therefore been to India at least once and were able to reflect on their experience. The picture they painted of India and Indian (or more accurately Gujarati) Jainism was often romanticised – India was seen as a place where they would be able to live a religious life more easily and to a fuller extent.

In India Jainism is a part of life. Genuine part of life. Completely integrated into a day-to-day. Even when I'm in India – I'll wake up, I'll walk barefoot to the closest temple and do puja, right? I'll come home, all the food will be Jain – and I mean properly Jain, no underground vegetables, sort of that stuff – the water would generally be boiled water, there's no really thought around it. [...] Whereas here it's not an integrated part of my life at all. If I'm gonna come do puja, I've gotta really find a way to work around my day-to-day living, I've gotta probably drive to a temple, even then I may only have one temple near me, I have to make a special effort – well it's down to you, how much effort you make – but I have to make a special effort to get Jain food and all of that stuff. [...] So it's a very natural part of life there. [...] Whereas here it requires that added effort. (Vijay)

When reflecting on Indian Jainism my young respondents often highlighted the accessibility and geographical density of Jain temples in Gujarati cities and the deeply engrained daily routine allowing for regular religious practice (e.g., performing *puja* before breakfast). Such daily practice would typically also include the effortlessness of following Jain dietary rules (i.e., not eating certain foods, not eating after sunset, drinking boiled water) and the presence of Jain ascetics, who personify religious ideals and act as sources of Jain knowledge. All of these elements were mentioned in Vijay's impressions of Gujarati Jainism, which describe a romanticised version of Jainism that could not exist outside of India, as there are no ascetics, only a low number of Jain worship spaces, and few accommodations for Jain daily practice.

Using words like “genuine” and “natural” to describe the practice of Jainism, Vijay also ascribed higher levels of authenticity to the way Jainism was practiced in India and saw it in idealised terms. He contrasted the perceived ease of practice in India with the obstacles large and small that prevented him from having the same religious engagement in England. Yet despite this idealised picture of Indian Jainism, several drawbacks of Gujarati Jain practice were often identified as well.

Is the idea of rigidity. One of the best things in this country is that we have a lot of forward-thinking people. And so some rituals are adapted⁸⁸ to the situation that presents itself here. Which would not happen in India. [...] It's where monks and nuns bring that rigidity – that just wouldn't work here. (Rushabh)

⁸⁸ “One example is men and women sitting in the same room during pratikraman.” (Rushabh)

So people go to the temple and stuff like that, but I don't know if they adopt that much into their own lives. [...] I've seen over here the way the people like... it's so compassionate – with others and stuff like that. Whereas with them lot, they sometimes think a bit selfishly about the way they do it and stuff. And it's a lot for show as well. Cause over there it's like “oh, what will the society think?” And things like that. (Daya)

The rigidity of practice enforced by Jain ascetics – who are in most cases reluctant to deviate from the traditional interpretations of doctrines, and performance of rituals and practices – and their unwillingness to embrace religious innovation and change were identified by Rushabh as negative aspects of Indian Jainism. Rather, he saw the openness to change as a welcome feature of Leicester Jainism. Daya also saw Jainism as practiced in India in a negative light; she thought Indian Jains were being forced by social pressures into disingenuous expressions of religiosity, which she thought was not the case in Leicester. She saw Leicester Jainism as characterised by compassion and a whole-hearted embracing of Jain teachings in people's lives. Both Rushabh and Daya thus saw Leicester Jainism as a preferable version of Jainism; a Jainism open to adapting to the needs of its followers, and one where an individual's religiosity was placed before the expectation of such religiosity.

The idealised image of Indian Jainism expressed by Vijay was often mixed with more reserved impressions voiced by Rushabh and Daya, often in the same breath by many of my young interviewees. Many perceived India as a place of superior religious opportunities, but did not see themselves moving there in order to further their religious engagement. A possible explanation of their dismissal is that my respondents were not particularly religious or that they enjoyed the comforts of European life, but I want to add another potential reason for their reluctance to move to India – that the Jainism they experienced in India was of the 'religious' type and therefore incompatible with their 'spiritual' style of practice.

If we take another look at the things mentioned by Vijay, Rushabh, and Daya: they talk of visiting temples, regularly practicing Jain rituals, and following Jain dietary rules, as well as of the presence of Jain ascetics, rigidity of practice, and disingenuous displays of religiosity – all elements mentioned in the discussion of 'religious' Jainism, which younger Leicester Jains rejected as a style of practice. Instead, the young Jains preferred to stay in England, where they arguably felt more

comfortable in their practice of ‘spiritual’ Jainism. Yet despite the general satisfaction with living in Leicester expressed by all of my young interviewees, their ability to practice Jainism was nevertheless skewed and in some instances hampered by their English surroundings.

Biggest [difficulty of being a Jain in England] is: nobody knows what Jainism is, right? [...] Many people don't have the capacity to explain what Jainism is, so for the sake of ease, they would just say “oh, I'm a Hindu”, which then deteriorates Jainism even further, even fewer people know about it, because we ourselves are telling people we're not Jain. [...] In a more practical sense, I think the most difficult thing would be the food. [...] Unless I go to a vegan restaurant [...] and even in a vegan restaurant – if I was to try find something that's actually Jain, I would still potentially struggle. You know, in terms of no underground vegetables and stuff like that. So the dietary aspect of the religion, I think is very difficult, the understanding amongst people is very difficult. (Vijay)

The biggest difficulty is understanding or lack of thereof [sic.]. So when you say to somebody you're a Jain, they have no idea what you're talking about. Most people haven't heard of the religion. [...] Not having the power that a monk or a nun brings is, I think, is a big lack of guidance. [...] And then the third difficulty is lack of interest. Which I find in a lot of young people today. Some of that stems from me as well. Like, sometimes I feel like “I don't wanna sit in the long rituals that take place upstairs”. [...] Yeah, lack of interest in the Centre – in the Centre and in the religion – I think that's a huge difficulty. (Rushabh)

Representative of the wider sentiments among young Leicester Jains, Vijay and Rushabh foregrounded the main difficulties encountered by Jains living in Leicester (and elsewhere in England). Both spoke of the fact that the wider English society did not have much knowledge of Jainism and lamented its inflexibility to accommodate Jain practice – in another part of the interview Rushabh mentioned encountering difficulties with structuring his time around Jain ritual practices and celebrations (e.g., taking time off during Paryushan), and Vijay voiced the concerns of many Leicester Jains by elaborating on the difficulties of trying to follow Jain dietary restrictions (which are usually impossible to fully satisfy outside of Jain homes and a handful of Leicester restaurants). Many of my respondents also mentioned the lack of religious infrastructure – in the form of temples and Jain ascetics – as an obstacle in their religious practice, and some noted the lack of interest in Jainism, especially

among younger generations of Leicester Jains, who are generally perceived (mostly by older Leicester Jains) as giving low priority to religion and focusing on more secular activities (such as education, career, hobbies, etc.) at the expense of their religious/spiritual development.

Looking again at the elements mentioned in relation to the difficulties encountered by Jains in Leicester, we might notice a similarity with the elements touched upon when discussing the youth's perception of Indian Jainism. Vijay and Rushabh mentioned the social environment and its unfamiliarity with Jain practice (especially in relation to food and religious holidays), non-accessibility of religious infrastructure (i.e., temples and ascetics), and the prevalent lack of interest in the Jain Centre and the religious activities organised there – all of which were again associated with 'religious' Jainism. I would argue that the Leicester Jain youth, while committed to their 'spiritual' style of Jain practice, nevertheless recognised the value of (at least certain elements of) 'religious' Jainism – such as performance of rituals, adoption of Jain dietary rules, or dedicated practice – and perhaps even saw it as an enhanced or advanced version of their 'spiritual' Jainism (which would be in line with Jainism's conception of seeing lay life as a progressive path towards renunciation [see Jaini 1998, 157-187]). Given the youth's insistence on understanding Jain beliefs and practices, it would not be unimaginable for them to adopt a more 'religious' type of Jainism once they have understood the meaning and purpose of individual practices.

Conclusion: What Matters Are the Small Things

This chapter built on the main emphasis of the previous chapter (*Historical Trajectory*) and looked at one of the generations that were formed as a consequence of past migration – the Leicester Jain youth. The youth's interpretation of Jainism and their style of 'spiritual' practice was particularly distinct from the way Jainism was practiced by older Leicester Jains, who engaged in 'religious' style of practice typically encountered in non-diasporic Indian environments, and thus the chapter put the youth's unique style of practice at the centre of its enquiry. It analysed the potential implications and contributing factors of the 'religious'/'spiritual' dichotomy

in light of Heelas's and Woodhead's (2005) conceptualisation of the 'subjective turn,' looked at the dichotomy's potential historical roots in Banks's orthodoxy–heterodoxy–neo-orthodoxy model of belief tendencies, and presented an extensive examination of the facets adding to the complexity of the youth's 'spiritual' Jainism: the role of language, children's religious education, and socio-geographical location.

It is apt that this chapter drew to a close with an examination of the small impracticalities of living in England, as it is the small, everyday aspects of living in diaspora that we turn to next. While it is important to consider the bigger societal and community-wide trends that influence the practice of Jainism in Leicester (like migratory patterns or the 'subjective turn'), the seemingly inconsequential things in daily life also contribute to religious change in ways big and small. We already encountered a few such examples, such as language competence or *pathshala* structure, and in the next chapter we will consider two further examples in-depth – space and food. Being constricted by a lack of funds and the numerical weakness of the Jain community, the Leicester Jains were forced into forming a multi-sectarian worship space, a sight unprecedented in India. On an even smaller scale, Leicester Jains are every day confronted by the choice of what to eat as mentioned by Vijay above. The unavailability of restaurants serving food in compliance with the Jain dietary restrictions and the ease of breaking those restrictions contributed to a loosening of dietary rules among Leicester Jains. Yet within the changes engendered by multi-sectarian worship spaces and lax following of Jain dietary proscriptions, one can find evidence of persistent power dynamics that shape Leicester Jainism and transform the everyday experience of Leicester Jains.

Chapter 5

Transforming the Everyday

After dissecting the Leicester Jain community into ever-smaller pockets of difference in the previous two chapters – slicing it up into three generations in *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)* and into two styles of practice in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)* – we now return to viewing the Leicester Jain community as a whole, a unit connected by a variety of elements. We transition from looking at historical and intergenerational trends to the small, mundane, and almost unnoticeable realities of everyday living. While broader trends are an important element of religious change, so are the practicalities of daily living that impose constraints on Jainism as it is practiced in diaspora.

In this chapter we will look at two particular examples of such transformations of the everyday that are common to *all* the Leicester Jains – the multi-sectarian worship space of the Leicester Jain Centre and the intricacies of Jain dietary regulations. These two examples of everyday transformations highlight the lived experiences of Leicester Jains as individuals (and a community) practicing Jainism outside of its traditional environment, reveal the small and subtle realities affecting their religious practice, and uncover the hidden hierarchies and changing continuities within the Leicester Jain community. In general, this chapter is guided by an exploration of how religious practice changes due to mundane (im)practicalities faced by the Leicester Jains and asserts that religious practice are not only the rituals and ceremonies conducted on special occasions, but also – if not primarily – the daily, mundane, routine, and unremarkable activities that Leicester Jains perform almost unwittingly and practically automatically.

The two examples are connected by a common theme, a common approach, and a common result. The *common theme* of the chapter, as already stated, is the everyday, lived experience of Leicester Jainism: decisions and dilemmas regarding food are something Leicester Jains encounter every day, even multiple times a day, and most Leicester Jains come to the Leicester Jain Centre at least several times a month for bigger communal ceremonies, smaller religious events, or private

individual ritual performances. Our examination of the Jain Centre and Leicester Jains' dietary practices thus reveal the everyday materiality of practicing and adapting Jainism to living in diaspora. Secondly, the two examples provide fertile grounds for a structuralist analysis of invisible hierarchies they encompass and engender, which is the *common approach* binding together the examples of space and food. Symbolic boundaries and hierarchies that permeate the space and diets of the Leicester Jain community are implicit, largely unacknowledged, and simply taken for granted within the community. Boundaries that delineate sacred from profane space in the Leicester Jain Centre, markers differentiating Jains from non-Jains through food consumption, and hierarchies that order different sub-groups of Leicester Jains according to religious practice and adoption of food avoidances are all overlooked aspects of Leicester Jainism that become accessible once we apply a structuralist lens and investigate the social functions performed by the space arrangements and food avoidances that saturate the practice of Jainism in Leicester. And lastly, the two halves of this chapter are tied together by a *common result*. While this result is not a straightforward outcome or a simple solution, it is a common realisation that within the explicit changes both in the Leicester Jain Centre and the Leicester Jains' dietary practices lie the fundamental continuities that remain untouched by living in diaspora and the transformations that engenders. While numerous elements of Jain practice change, many do not, and even within the changes themselves we can spot underlying continuities tying diasporic and non-diasporic Jainisms together.

Hidden Hierarchies: The Leicester Jain Centre

*Vignette: An Evening Aarti*⁸⁹

Entering through the brown glass doors of the Jain Centre's main entrance I was greeted by the sweet smell of incense permeating the air and an imposing staircase

⁸⁹ This description is a depiction of a generic, though typical event. The substantive content is representative of similar events in the Jain Centre and is based on numerous participant observations of such occasions.

leading up. While I took off my shoes and put them on the top shelf of the wooden rack, I noticed an elderly lady heading upstairs, touching the carpeted stairs and then her chest as a form of blessing. “*Jai jinendra, kem cho,*” I greeted her and enquired about her wellbeing. We walked slowly up the stairs and onto the first floor landing, where we stopped in front of the Digambar temple to make a small obeisance to the *murtis* before walking through the two-leaf doors into the main hall of the Jain Centre – the Derawasi temple. Stepping into the high ceilinged space with tall stained-glass windows and an unobstructed view of the Centre’s main *murtis*, we grew quieter in our conversation and slowly stepped down an informal aisle delineated by rows of upholstered red chairs that would be full of women to the right and men to the left during bigger events. I made my way along the stained-glass depictions of Mahavir-swami’s life story, past the open floor space at the front intended as seating space for younger and more agile visitors, and towards the long marble step separating the outer Derawasi temple from its more intimate and sombre inner temple.

I stepped onto the cold step and into the intricately carved darkness of the sandstone inner temple, where a group of about ten elderly people were standing in the small clearing among elaborately sculpted pillars, sheltered by the delicately carved dome arching above – six women to the right and four men to the left. Vanitaben stood at the centre, in front of the Shanti-nath *murti*, holding a five-pronged candleholder positioned on a metal plate, which also harboured several coins given by others as signs of renunciation of material possessions. Once all the preparatory actions were completed, Jayeshbhai called out the rhythmic lines “*Namo-ara-siddha-acharya-upadyaya-savvasa-dubhyaha,*” and thus the *aarti* began.

Led by the strong voices of Bharatbhai and Jayeshbhai, the gathered sang or clapped along with the devotional song, while Vanitaben and two women standing on either side of her circled the *aarti* plate clock-wise in front of the *murtis*. Once the song finished Bharatbhai called out the signature line of praise for the main *murti*: “*Bolo, bolo, Shanti-nath bhagawana kee jay!,*” with everyone joining him for the last two words. The *mangal divo*, which always follows the *aarti*, started with Bharatbhai calling out another ‘mini *navkar* mantra’ and Lakshmikantbhai, who carried a metal plate with a single ghee candle on it, replaced Vanitaben in front of the main *murti*,

while the others resumed the singing and clapping. The *mangal divo* concluded with another cry of praise for Shanti-nath, after which Vanitaben and Lakshmikantbhai took their individual metal plates and circled them in front of all the representations of *tirthankars* and *devas* in the temple hall, while the others sang in the inner temple. After they returned to the inner temple and the songs had concluded, Bharatbhai led the gathered in praising important figures represented in the Derawasi temple – “*Shanti-nath bhagawana kee jay!*,” “*Parshwa-nath bhagawana kee jay!*,” “*Mahavir-swami bhagawana kee jay!*,” and so on – concluding with a cry of veneration for the Jain community in general.

Then we slowly made our way to the Sthanakvasi *upashray*, a simple room with two bookcases, a low chest displaying a book, and about a dozen chairs, where we clustered near the glass doors with our hand clasped in front of our chests. After all had gathered, I joined the worshipers in song and practiced my Gujarati reading skills by keeping up with the lyrics written on a framed board at the front. As the song concluded, we repeated the “*kee jay!*” cries and made our way to the Digambar temple. There, a man stepped forward and performed the necessary rituals of the Digambar *aarti* – first circling a small ghee candle, a *divo*, on a metal plate in front of the *tirthankar murtis*, then setting a tiny square of camphor on fire, dropping it into a small round container next to the *divo*, and symbolically pushing the rising vapour towards the *murtis* of *tirthankars*, Bahubali-swami (son of the first *tirthankar*), and a photograph of a *devi* – all to the tune of two devotional songs sung by the rest of the gathered Leicester Jains. Each segment was preceded by a ‘mini *navkar mantra*,’ accompanied by the rhythmic ringing of a lone bell, and followed by several “*kee jay!*” exclamations honouring the *murtis* of the Digambar temple.

Approaching the end of the evening’s *aarti*, most of the group made their way to the *gnan mandir* on the opposite side of the landing, to sing a song of praise in honour of Gautam-swami and two songs devoted to Manibhadra and Nakoda Bhairavji seamlessly merged into one. Clapping alongside the songs I was already looking forward to the concluding act of the evening *aarti* – the reading or reciting of the forgiveness prayer in the Shrimad Rajchandra room on the floor above. I could still vividly remember the first time I heard it recited by Vidhya, who filled the words of the *kshamapna* with her emotions and made it sound as if the prayer was

her personal plea for forgiveness. On this particular evening though, the *kshamapna* was read unsentimentally by one of the gentlemen in the *gnan mandir* and very few people ascended upstairs to pay obeisance to Shrimad Rajchandra. Most simply made their way downstairs, chatted for a while with their fellow-worshipers, and then left the Centre as its doors got locked for the night.

* * *

Perched on the edge of Oxford Street in central Leicester sits a three-story-tall building known as the Leicester Jain Centre. Though white at the front, the brick-red back of the Jain Centre betrays the building's Christian past with its nave structure, tall stained windowpanes, and closely packed support columns and beams. The building in which the Leicester Jain Centre now resides was in fact built in 1862 as a Congregational Chapel, which then fell into disuse, was eventually closed in 1978, and later bought, refurbished, and embraced by the local Jain community.⁹⁰

The Jain Centre's ground floor was primarily devoted to socialising activities – the majority of the space was taken up by an assembly hall, where events like quizzes, cultural programmes, and general meetings were held, and the hall was also used as an eating space during bigger events. At the back of the building was the 'service area' with a kitchen, serving area, a staff office, and a small library containing books in Gujarati, as well as Hindi and English. The library and the corridor running parallel to the assembly hall were also used for Sunday *pathshala* classes and the entrance to the building was occasionally utilised for honorary receptions of bigger groups or important individuals.

⁹⁰ For a more detailed description of the Leicester Jain Centre see *Appendix 2*.

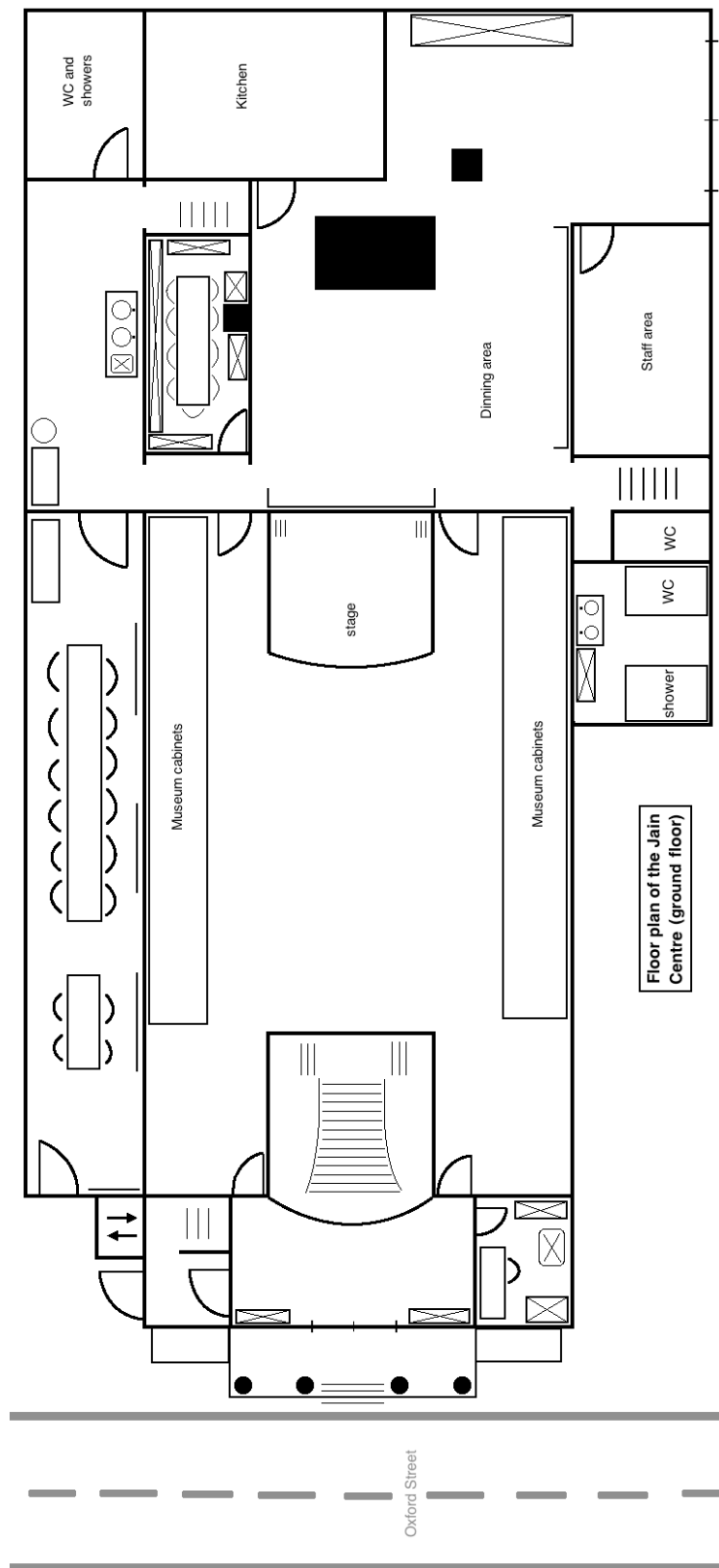


Image 14: Floor plan of the Jain Centre's ground floor (image by the author)



Image 15: Ground floor of the Jain Centre (top left: façade; top right: entrance; bottom: assembly hall) (images by the author)

The first floor of the Leicester Jain Centre was devoted to religious activities. The largest amount of space was designated as the Derawasi worship space, which I have divided into the ‘outer temple,’ filled with rows of seating and the *snatra puja* structure, and the ‘inner temple,’ where the *garbha-griha* (or the ‘inner sanctum’) was located amidst intricately carved sandstone pillars and housing the three *murtis* of the Jain Centre – Shanti-nath’s in the middle (as his is the main *murti* of the temple), and Parshwa-nath to the left and Mahavir-swami to the right. Tucked into corners of the first floor of the building were also other worship spaces – the Sthanakvasi *upashray* with limited furniture and a book displayed in a reverential

position on top of a low ornamental chest; the Digambar *jinalay* with three small *murtis* of *tirthankars* and a bigger statue of Bahubali-swami, the son of the first *tirthankar* Adi-nath; and the *gnan mandir*, where statues of gods and influential Jain teachers sat on a marble shelf.

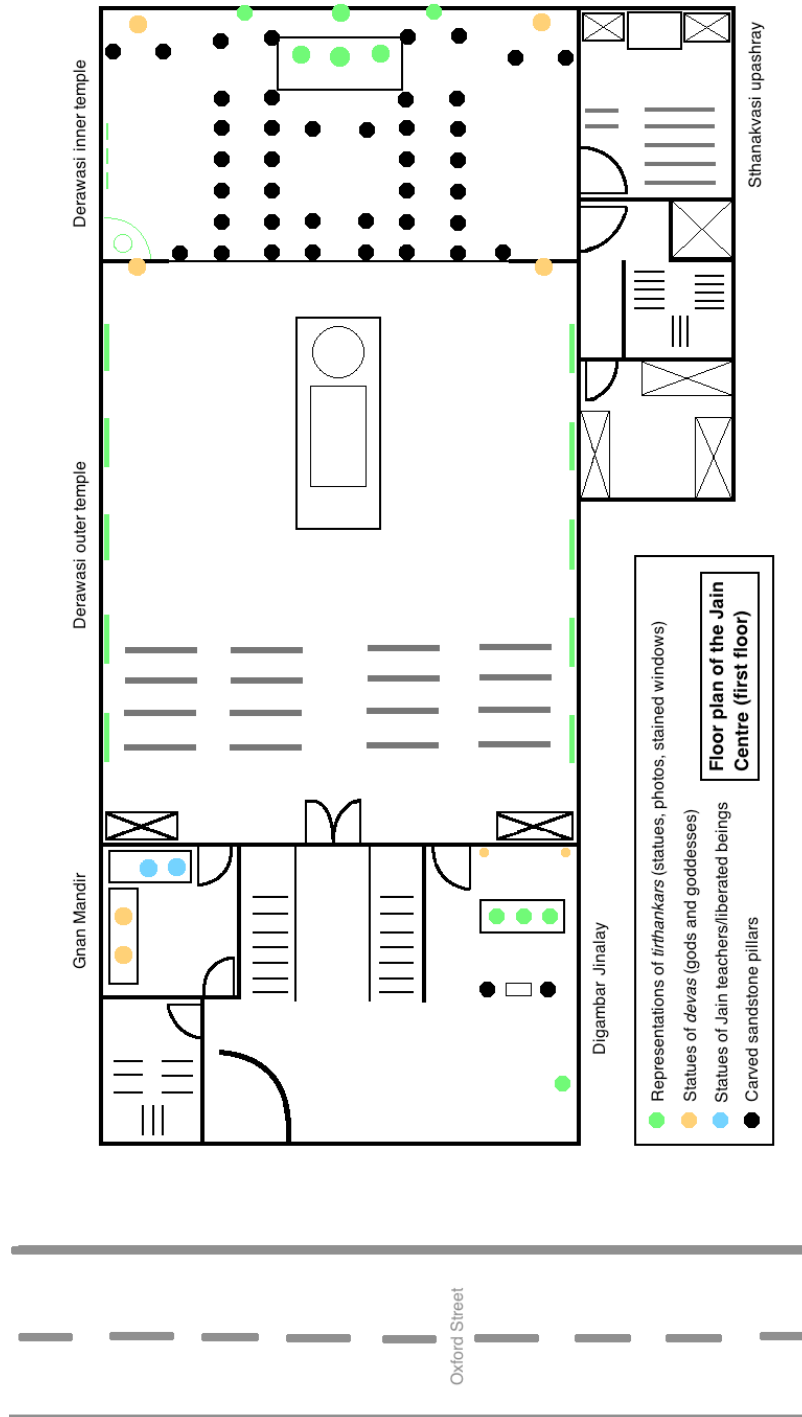


Image 16: Floor plan of the Jain Centre's first floor (image by the author)



Image 17: First floor of the Jain Centre (top left: ‘outer temple’; top right: ‘inner temple’; bottom left: Sthanakvasi *upashray*; bottom right: Digambar *jinalay*) (images by the author)

The second floor of the Leicester Jain Centre was small and equal in size to the first-floor landing beneath it. This small room had been devoted to Shrimad Rajchandra, an influential lay thinker from the end of the 19th century (see Dundas 2002, 262-265) and displayed a large photograph and statue of Rajchandra alongside a variety of books.

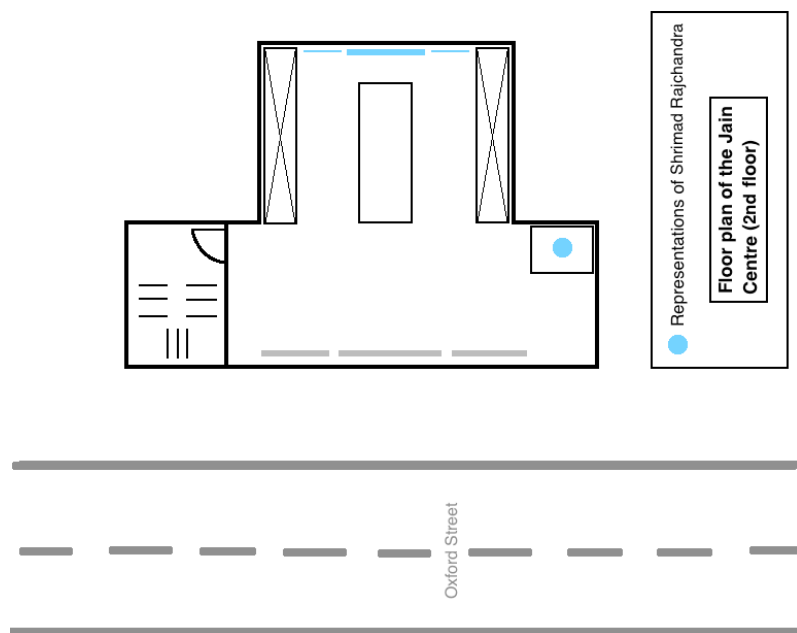


Image 18: Floor plan of the Jain Centre's second floor (image by the author)



Image 19: Second floor of the Jain Centre (image by the author)

A Spatial Analysis of the Leicester Jain Centre

Even for those wandering into the Leicester Jain Centre for the first time, the separation between the social and religious elements of the Centre is visible from the distribution of the space. The ground floor is earmarked for social, administrative, storage, and other mundane uses and acts only in support of what is above – the sacred spaces that are the focal point and the *raison d'être* of the building itself.

While I will not dwell on the *substance* of ‘the sacred’ within the Leicester Jain Centre (be it energies, ideals, representations, or something else), it should be useful to offer a quick definition of the sacred as it relates to the Jain Centre. I want to draw on a simple definition of the sacred as “things set apart and forbidden” by Émile Durkheim (1995 [1912], 44): being “profoundly differentiated” and “radically opposed” to the category of the profane (ibid., 36), the sacred is “protected and isolated by prohibitions” (ibid., 38) “expressed outwardly by a visible sign that permits ready recognition of this very special classification” (ibid., 37). Employing Durkheim’s loose definition of the sacred enables me to – instead of defining *what* is sacred – focus on what things the Leicester Jain community singled out as ‘different’ through their practice. By enforcing the highest number of regulations and mechanisms that set individual things apart from others, the Leicester Jains signaled the sacred status of individual objects. In the Leicester Jain Centre (as well as in other Jain image-worshipping spaces) the clearest and most numerous protections and prohibitions centred around the *murtis* of *tirthankars*, which were protected not only by many physical boundaries (explored below), but also through the imperative of being touched only by ritually clean individuals (i.e., freshly bathed individuals wearing clothes in which they have not eaten, drunk, or excreted, and covering their mouths and noses with a piece of cloth). Below I argue that not all *murtis* in the Leicester Jain Centre were imbued with the same level of sacredness by the community (which can be inferred from the quality and quantity of protective boundaries), yet they nonetheless possessed and exuded it to the space around them.

Specific boundaries that delineate the sacred from the profane and signal one’s impending proximity to the sacred were found in many forms inside the Jain Centre: taking one’s shoes off in the entryway (and thus transitioning from an outside world, where impurity and social demands reign supreme, to a space intended for looking

inward, brushing off social constraints, and purifying the mind); vertically ascending towards the sacredness encapsulated in the inner sanctum (going up the main staircase, stepping onto the single step leading from the outer to the inner Derawasi temple, and over the exaggerated threshold of the *garbha-griha*); passing through doorways and over changing surfaces (through the doorway leading from the first floor's landing to the outer temple, from the dark red carpet of the landing onto the beige woolly carpet of the worship areas, and over the palm-wide wooden strip demarcating the Digambar worship space), moving through the aesthetic changes in space (from a bright and spacious outer temple, through the dark and sombre inner temple's, and towards the intensely light inner sanctum), and even changes in dress (one has to change into ritually pure clothing to enter the *garbha-griha* and cover one's mouth with a piece of cloth, a *muhpatti*) all contributing to the increasing intensification of sacredness culminating in the Derawasi *murtis* situated in the inner sanctum – and the perceivable centre – of the Leicester Jain Centre.

The central position – in both space and practice – of the Derawasi worship hall and the Derawasi *murtis* is visible to anyone who visits the Leicester Jain Centre, or even consults the Centre's floor plans. Not only is the largest and most central space of the Jain Centre devoted to the Derawasi branch, but the barriers announcing one's gradual advance towards the sacred discussed above converge around the Derawasi *murtis* housed in the inner sanctum. Conversely, the spaces dedicated to other branches of Jainism seem to be functioning either in the service of the Derawasi practices or as their afterthought.

The Prologue that Is the Digambar Temple

The Digambar temple (or *jinalay*, the place of the *jinas*) was positioned and used as a sort of prelude to the Derawasi temple. It was located practically *on* the landing (and during Digambar *pujas* worshippers regularly spilled onto it) with only a simple boundary of a palm-wide wooden border separating the sacred space exuded by the Digambar *murtis* and the profane space of the landing. While the *gnan mandir* on the opposite side of the landing was encapsulated within four walls, the Digambar temple was partially open in order to accommodate the numbers of Digambar

worshippers, though with the effect of the semi-permeable boundary between the sacred and profane spaces being the dilution of that sacredness.

This secondary status of the Digambar space was expressed not only through the physicality of space, but through common practice as well. As depicted in the opening vignette, a typical Leicester Jain coming into the Jain Centre would usually display the following sequence of actions expressing reverence and obeisance: (1) touching one of the first steps of the main staircase with their right hand and then carrying it to their chest as a form of blessing, (2) looking at the Digambar *murtis* with folded hands and bowing slightly to the statues, (3) and bringing one's hand to one's chest after touching the step leading into the inner Derawasi temple, before (4) arriving in front of the Derawasi *murtis* for *darshan*, *aarti*, or *puja*. This held true for both Derawasi and Sthanakvasi Leicester Jains, and was typical for Digambar Leicester Jains as well (though their characteristic behaviour was difficult to observe, as there were only about twenty-five Digambar Jains in the Leicester Jain community). As can be glimpsed from the described sequence, the main goal was to arrive in front of the Derawasi *murtis* and the Digambar *murtis* represented only a stop along the way.

While the depiction of the Digambar temple as an initiation stage on one's way to the sacredness held in the Derawasi *murtis* might appear as a calculated move on the part of the Derawasi Jains to assert their dominance in the community, I would argue that it is more likely a result of the demographical realities constricting the Leicester Jain community. While a generous estimate of the Jain population in Leicester would add up to around two thousand, such a generous estimate of its Digambar subset would amount to only about thirty individuals. Thus it was not necessary for the Digambar *jinalay* to occupy an area of the same size as its Derawasi equivalent, as well as for the Digambar *murtis* to receive as much reverence from followers of the Derawasi branch of Jainism as do the *murtis* of their own tradition.

The Precarious Position of the Sthanakvasi Upashray

The second space that functioned more in the service of Derawasi Jainism than as its own religious space was the Sthanakvasi *upashray*. While the Digambar temple was

arguably accorded a smaller proportion of the overall space due to the small number of Digambar Jains in Leicester, the Sthanakvasi *upashray* most likely took up a similarly small area due to the nature of Sthanakvasi religious practice. Although Sthanakvasi Jains represented roughly forty per cent of the Leicester Shwetambar population, their practice does not involve worship of images or necessitate any other bulky paraphernalia and could thus be conducted very space-efficiently.

Yet the secondary position of the Sthanakvasi *upashray* can be observed primarily through its spatial positioning. While the Sthanakvasi Jains eschew the use of imagery in their religious practice, they walked past the *murtis* of the Digambar and Derawasi branches on their way to the Sthanakvasi *upashray*. Although there was an alternative entry point into the *upashray* (the doors that lead onto a narrow staircase descending into the service area of the ground floor⁹¹), I have never observed anyone using the alternative doorway to enter it and even the few individuals, whom I have seen accessing the *upashray* via the service area staircase, have nevertheless walked through the Derawasi inner temple to reach it. In practice, Sthanakvasi individuals were therefore consistently faced with images of *tirthankars* even when trying to access a worship space intended for their image-free religious practice. As a result, the vast majority of Leicester Sthanakvasis bowed to the Digambar and Derawasi *murtis* on their way to their final destination within the Jain Centre (wherever that may be), while some Sthanakvasis started adopting image-worship as well (examined below).

Secondly, there was also a subjugation of the Sthanakvasi *upashray* under the Derawasi umbrella in terms of practice, since the Sthanakvasi *upashray* was customarily used as the site of adult education classes taking place twice a week. Although the religious classes did not revolve around explicitly Derawasi-related content and the *upashray* was used in the same manner as any (Sthanakvasi or Derawasi) *upashray* in India would be – that is for acquiring religious knowledge and performing *samayiks* or other austerities – the nominally Sthanakvasi *upashray* in the Leicester Jain Centre was not a Sthanakvasi space (as the Digambar *jinalay* was for Leicester Digambers). It was a space dedicated to *all* Leicester Jains and

⁹¹ That particular staircase was used mostly for maintenance and did not have the religious connotations ascribed to the main staircase.

intended for supplementary activities (e.g., adult religious classes, individual *samayik* performance etc.) and supporting the more ‘direct’ religious practice conducted in the Derawasi temple hall (i.e., engaging with the *murtis*). The Sthanakvasi *upashray* was removed enough from the sacred aura exuded by the Derawasi *murtis* (both spatially and through the employment of boundaries) to enable a different use of the space for the image-centred Jainism, one that was centred on knowledge and did not necessitate the presence of *murtis*.

This division of ‘direct’ practice and supplementary activities, however, was not rigid, as the *upashray* was regularly used for other purposes as well – most often for individuals or small groups undertaking one or more consecutive *samayiks* on important religious occasions – and the religious classes themselves were for most attendees encapsulated within the ritual acceptance of temporary asceticism that is *samayik*. Thus religious practice within the *upashray* was also customary, though it focused on rituals that are present in the Sthanakvasi (as well as Derawasi) ritual arsenal and do not require the presence of a *murti*.

The Afterthought of the Shrimad Rajchandra Room

The Shrimad Rajchandra room was the only worship space on the Jain Centre’s second floor and could be accessed solely via a narrow and windy staircase at the side of the building. There were no regular events held in the Shrimad Rajchandra room, though people sometimes visited it on their own as a gesture of obeisance or spent time in it during the evening *aartis* (as mentioned in the opening vignette). Not only was the Shrimad Rajchandra room physically the most distant from the centre of the religious action happening at the Leicester Jain Centre – a floor removed from the Derawasi temple hall – it was also the worship space that sees the least amount of investment in terms of events and intra-community promotion. While the space itself was efficiently laid out and could be used for various types of meditative, *samayik*-related, or other contemplative activities, the Leicester Jain Centre did not utilise the space in such ways. It was rarely mentioned in conversations and only got

highlighted in narratives of inter-sectarian cooperation and inclusivity of the Jain Centre as one of the five worship spaces available to local Jains.⁹²

The spatial positioning of the Shrimad Rajchandra room and the lack of institutional attention given to it situated this particular worship space as a sort of architectural and organisational afterthought in the process of constructing a markedly Derawasi-centred Jain Centre. Even the local group of about thirty to fifty dedicated Shrimad Rajchandra followers that resided in and around Leicester met at the homes of individual Shrimad Rajchandra (or more specifically Rakeshbhai Zaveri's Shrimad Rajchandra Mission [Dharampur]) followers with one of the devout families actually allocating a separate room of their newly built house to a 'consecrated' Shrimad Rajchandra (or as they call it *gnan*) *mandir*. While the Jain Centre's president kept encouraging the group to utilise the space available to them at the Jain Centre, they have not been willing to use the Centre for much more than holding large lectures on occasions of Rakeshbhai Zaveri's visits (which were held in the Derawasi temple hall after some coaxing by the president), and the underlying peripheral position of the Shrimad Rajchandra room in the Jain Centre conceivably played a role in those decisions.

Internal Hierarchies and Their Effects on Religious Change

As can be seen from the above analysis of the Leicester Jain Centre, layers of visible and invisible hierarchies structure the space used by the Leicester Jain community. The Derawasi *murtis* and the Derawasi temple in which they are situated were the clear centre and focal point of the Jain Centre, while the secondary roles of other worship spaces were noticeable not only through their spatial positioning and routine use, but could also be gleaned from the *aarti* trail described in the opening vignette.

The majority of time and attention during an evening *aarti* was given to the Derawasi *murtis*, with other worship spaces – and thus other branches of Jainism – hierarchically ranked from most to least important through the movement of the ritual sequence. With Sthanakvasis being the second largest group within the Leicester Jain community they were positioned right next to the Centre's 'centre' and

⁹² The *gnan mandir* was counted as a separate worship space, although it did not serve any particular subgroup of Leicester Jains and could simply be seen as a part of Derawasi practice.

were second in line for the evening *aarti*. While the Digambars were fewer still, they have historical significance over the Shrimad Rajchandra group – their presence spanning roughly as many centuries as the Shwetambaras' compared to the mere several decades of the Shrimad Rajchandra following – and therefore took the third place in the evening *aarti* sequence. The Shrimad Rajchandra room was positioned on an altogether different floor and as the last act of the evening *aarti* (though frequently skipped over), arguably set aside and detached to emphasise the recency and smallness of the Shrimad Rajchandra following compared to the towering presence of Shwetambar and Digambar historical seniority and numerical size represented by the expansive and oft-visited first floor of the Leicester Jain Centre. The evening *aarti* trail therefore revealed the specific intra-religious hierarchy present in the Leicester Jain Centre: the Derawasis being at the top as the unquestioned centre and norm of Leicester Jainism, followed by Sthanakvasis as the second most important group, Digambar Jains on the outskirts of the Centre and its community, and lastly the followers of Shrimad Rajchandra, who straddled the line between being both inside as well as outside the Leicester Jain Centre as well as its religious community.

It is also interesting to note that although the division between Digambars and Shwetambaras is typically presented as the most pertinent to the understanding and organisation of Jainism (particularly in introductory texts to Jainism), it had little weight in Leicester, where the Digambar community was rather minute compared to the overwhelming Shwetambar majority. Instead, the main distinction was between Derawasi and Sthanakvasi Jains, whether in relation to religious self-identification (where a Sthanakvasi individual used an explanatory qualifier, while a Derawasi individual was referred to simply as 'Jain'), rituals (such as *pratikraman*, as described below), or space within the Jain Centre. With the two groups being roughly equal in size, they occupied the most prominent positions in the Leicester Jain community, while Digambars and Shrimad Rajchandra followers got lost in the binary prioritisation of the two Shwetambar branches.

Attempts at Inclusion

The leadership of the Leicester Jain Centre worked hard to blur the lines delineating this intra-religious hierarchy within their fold and establish balance between different Jain branches within the Centre. The most telling example of their efforts was the religious calendar adopted by the Leicester Jain Centre. The Derawasi and Sthanakvasi religious calendars differ by one day and therefore the starting day of Shwetambar Jainism's biggest celebration, Paryushan, differs between the two branches. To accommodate both its Derawasi and Sthanakvasi populations (which split roughly 6:4 among Shwetambar Leicester Jains), the Leicester Jain Centre switched from following the Derawasi to following the Sthanakvasi calendar yearly, so that every other year was organised according to the same calendar.⁹³

In 2015 (and 2017) the Centre adopted the Sthanakvasi religious calendar, which had two major consequences: (1) the whole Leicester Jain Centre started the Paryushan celebrations following the Sthanakvasi calendar (which was a day later than according to Derawasi calendar), and (2) the Sthanakvasis were assigned the Derawasi outer temple for their *pratikraman* (ritualised repentance), while the Derawasis conducted their *pratikraman* in the assembly hall downstairs. Although none of the *pratikramans* involve *murtis*, the outer temple location was nevertheless considered to be of higher status, therefore more desirable, and assigned to the community whose calendar was utilised by the Centre. As the number of Sthanakvasis participating in the Paryushan *pratikramans* was too large to fit into the Sthanakvasi *upashray*, the use of the outer temple hall was to be expected as was the greater desirability of the outer temple compared to the assembly hall, which is typically reserved for social activities and eating.

Incorporating *samayik*-based events into the religious calendar of the Leicester Jain Centre to better cater to Sthanakvasis, or facing the right-hand wall and putting up a thick curtain to obstruct the sight of *murtis* while doing so, were some other examples of the leadership's efforts for inclusion of Sthanakvasi Leicester Jains in the overall structure of the Jain Centre. Yet the intra-religious hierarchy present in the community continued to bleed through, as all major events within the Leicester

⁹³ The Digambar equivalent of the Paryushan – Das Lakshan – occurs several days after the Shwetambar Paryushan and is therefore organised separately.

Jain Centre were nevertheless performed in a space of Derawasi Jainism and conducted with the implicit or explicit presence of Derawasi *murtis*. The attempts at promoting all branches of Jainism equally by the Centre's leadership thus had a limited reach, as they were confined by the underlying architecture of the building and the community occupying it.

This, of course, does not mean that particular sub-groups of Leicester Jains were excluded from the worship space of the Jain Centre or did not feel comfortable practicing in it. Instead, the dominance of the Derawasi idiom of religious practice influenced the practices of Sthanakvasi, Digambar, and Shrimad Rajchandra Leicester Jains in ways that would be impossible in a non-diasporic setting. The Leicester Jains were able to unite into a single religious community by minimising internal ('sectarian') differences and accentuating the commonalities that existed within the community (see Knott 2009, Yang and Ebaugh 2001), thus moving towards a common idiom of religious practice, one based on Derawasi style of worship.

Normativity of Derawasi Jainism

The space of the Leicester Jain Centre itself as well as the established practices of community worship within it influenced the religious expression of non-Derawasi Jains in Leicester by positioning the Derawasi mode of religious practice as the normal expression of Leicester Jainism, thus nudging non-Derawasis ever closer to adopting (some of) its practices. The primacy of Derawasi practice among the Leicester Jains was expressed most clearly in the integration of *murtis* into Sthanakvasi religious practice through the rituals of *darshan*, *aarti*, and *puja*. *Darshan*, involving reverential viewing of a *murti*; *aarti*, consisting of offering lights to *murtis*; and *puja*, entailing a physical contact of touching a *murti*, are all rituals that are absent from the traditional Sthanakvasi religious expression yet present among the Leicester Sthanakvasi Jains.

Given their progression from mere viewing of a *murti* to the act of touching it, the rituals were adopted to varying extents among the Leicester Sthanakvasis. Most Sthanakvasis visiting the Jain Centre stopped in front of the *murtis* for a few moments and occasionally bowed to the images of *tirthankars*. As a conclusion to

bigger events, an *aarti* was typically performed in front of Derawasi and Digambar *murtis* and Sthanakvasis in the audience habitually participated in the *aarti* themselves through standing up, singing along, or clapping to the song's rhythm. Even during everyday evening *aartis*, which usually attracted fewer than a dozen worshipers, some Sthanakvasis were occasionally present and actively participated in the activities. *Puja* – understood to be quintessentially Derawasi – was performed less often by Sthanakvasi Jains, though there was still a number of Leicester Sthanakvasis who engaged in this ritual, which eliminates the distance between the worshiper and their object of worship through tactile connection.

Ishitaben, whom we met in *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)*, was one such Leicester Jain, who was part of a Sthanakvasi family yet periodically engaged in *puja*. She recognised the implicit presentation of Derawasi practice as normative in the Jain Centre, but interpreted it in the positive light of community formation.

So I think – we're a small community – I think there's less of that, that "I'm a Sthanakvasi, I don't do puja." I mean obviously the older generation are quite strict about it. They still keep to that and they will not do the puja, but... Like I do puja now. I didn't used to before, but now I really enjoy doing the puja, so I like doing it, so I'll do it and nobody objects to it. So I think we are now getting closer – as one. [...] Community, you have to be one, isn't it? You have to be one. [...] It is a Centre, I think... that's what I think. It's a Centre for everybody and we all do... If there's a Sthanakvasi function, then Derawasi will come and join, and they will... Derawasi, so Sthanakvasi will join. So we are all together. Some people like to do puja, some people don't. There is nobody tells anybody "oh!" It's up to you, isn't it? That's what I think.

While Ishitaben saw the performance of a *puja* as an optional ritual action and the adoption of image-worship by Sthanakvasis as an expression of a unified Leicester Jain community, the underlying normativity of Derawasi Jainism nevertheless peeked through her actions. While Sthanakvasis and their practices were understood to be an essential part of the Leicester Jain Centre, the Derawasi practices were nonetheless seen as a fuller – and arguably more correct – expression of Jain religiosity, one that utilised all available ritual means for ascending the ladder towards liberation. While the normativity of Derawasi Jainism may have existed

latently in the Leicester Jain community, that does not mean it did not exert its influence on the practice of Leicester Jainism. With the worship space – and subsequently the typical religious practice within it – being centred around the Derawasi idiom of worship, the followers of other branches of Jainism started adopting the practices characteristic of Derawasis (like *puja*) and thus transforming the Leicester Jainism in general ever closer to the Derawasi mode of religious expression. While the trend towards a more Derawasi-influenced style of Jain practice was slow-moving and often imperceptible, it was nevertheless a feature of religious change among Leicester Jains, one that will likely become more pronounced with time.

The Determinism of Everyday Realities

The space of the Leicester Jain Centre – its structure, its layout, and its space distribution – affected the way Leicester Jains performed religious activities within it. The position of the Digambar temple on the first floor landing encouraged the non-Digambar Leicester Jains passing by to make a small obeisance in order not to seem disrespectful of either this particular Leicester Jain subgroup or the *tirthankars* of the Digambar *murtis*. The big space of the outer Derawasi temple invited the community to use it as a gathering space, even for non-*murti*-centric activities and with image-rejecting Sthanakvasis in the midst. The smallness of the Sthanakvasi *upashray* discouraged any larger gatherings and lent itself best to small groups engaged in a similar activity. And the intensity of the Derawasi inner temple's aesthetic, its chiaroscuro ambiance, and the glow of three white *murtis* created a solemn and introspective mood in people standing within it.

The space of the Leicester Jain Centre – although devised and constructed by the Leicester Jains themselves – limited the possibilities of expressing religiosity within it and led Leicester Jainism towards a more Derawasi-inspired practice in all of its sub-sections. The material reality of the Leicester Jain Centre therefore – to a certain extent – determined the way Jainism was practiced in Leicester. Similarly, the everyday reality of grocery availability, restaurant menus, and English dietary habits limited the ability of Leicester Jains to follow Jain dietary proscriptions and led their food consumption towards laxer eating practices. It emphasised existing hierarchies

within the Leicester Jain community, while delineating new borders of in-group membership – themes that we turn to next.

Changing Continuities: Jain Food Practices

Vignette: My First Visit

The first time I ever stepped foot in the Leicester Jain Centre was in March 2014. Having had incredible luck stumbling onto a Mother's Day event exactly on the only night of my preparatory visit for my Master's fieldwork focusing on the lives of Leicester Jain women, I tried to soak in as much information as possible. I started speaking with a woman roughly my age – perhaps a few years older – who took me under her wing and sat me next to her in the front row of seats lining the Jain Centre's assembly hall. She patiently answered my questions, whispered summaries of what was being said in Gujarati into my ear, and when an elderly woman walked passed and I bashfully smiled at her, uttered a sentence that stuck with me ever since: "She's very religious – she doesn't eat potatoes."

At the time I had only just started my journey into Jainism and simply thought the lady perhaps took a vow to abstain from a particular vegetable in order to practice discipline and self-control, not yet knowing the full extent of dietary prohibitions I was wandering into. With every subsequent interaction I had with Leicester Jains food grew in importance to the point that the usual response to my question "is it difficult to be a Jain in England?" typically had to do with recounting struggles of obtaining Jain food in restaurants, complaints about the many Leicester Jains eating root vegetables these days, and lamenting the short days of English winter forcing even the staunchest of practitioners to temporarily abolish their practice of not eating after sunset.

* * *

Food – what was eaten and, even more importantly, what was avoided – was not only an important topic of conversation, but also a big part of religious change in the Leicester Jain community. With the many dietary restrictions prescribed by Jain doctrine and the generally non-accommodating restaurants unfamiliar with the Jain

dietary rules, the Leicester Jains either had to forego eating outside the home, or relax their dietary habits to better suit the food offered on restaurant menus.

In this section of the chapter, we will firstly explore the doctrinal explanations for the importance of food in Jainism and the various categories of food proscribed to practicing Jains; from straight-forward items like meat or alcohol, to more perplexing foodstuffs like aubergines, garlic, and – of course – potatoes. We will then engage in a semiotic analysis of Jain dietary practices and explore the symbolic dimension of food – in particular, how it is used to communicate inclusion/exclusion and status within a community. Reflecting on the role of food in Jamnagar (and thus foreshadowing our move to the non-diasporic environment of Gujarat in *Chapter 6: Echoes from India*), I will argue that a shift has occurred in Leicester Jainism, where food is used less as a sign of inclusion (or exclusion) and more frequently as a symbol granting cultural capital to an individual and establishing their status within the community.

The Doctrinal Underpinnings of Jain Dietary Proscriptions

For Jains food represents not only a source of nourishment for the body, but also a source of bondage for the soul. This tension between the practical and metaphysical aspects of food consumption arises primarily due to three doctrines fundamental to Jainism – the doctrine of *jiv* (soul), the doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence), and the doctrine of *karma* – which together make food a major source of *karmic* influx.

Food as Karmic Influx

According to Jain doctrine, every living being has a *jiv* (*jīva*), usually translated as a ‘soul’ or ‘life-force,’ though Dundas (2002, 93) translated it with a technical term ‘life-monad’. Every *jiv* is eternal, possesses pure consciousness, is omniscient, blissful, full of energy, and without form (see Glasenapp 1991, 2-3, Dundas 2002, 93-4, Jaini 1979, 102-6), but it is dirtied with *karma*, which weighs it down and keeps it in the material realm of continuous birth, death, and rebirth, called *samsar* (Jaini 1979, 107).

Jainism developed several elaborate classifications of *jivs*, of which the most prominent divides living beings based on the possible birth categories or destinies of a *jiv* into humans (*manuṣya*), gods or heavenly beings (*deva*), hell beings (*nārakī*), and animals and plants (*tiryāṇca*) – a classification which is often indicated by the stylized wheel of life, the *swastik*, used in Jain rituals and iconography (Jaini 1979, 108). A further classification is based upon the number of senses the body possesses, from the lowest one-sensed living beings to the most developed five-sensed ones.

1. *One-sensed living beings (ekendriya jīvas)* possess only the sense of touch. The Jains believe that even certain inanimate objects possess a soul and thus this category includes earth-bodied beings (clay, stones, metals, sand); water-bodied beings (water, snow, fog, dew); fire-bodied beings (flames, meteors, lightning etc.); and air-bodied beings (squalls, whirlwinds, and so on). All plants are one-sensed beings as well and may take individual embodiments (such as trees, shrubs etc.), or assume collective forms (potatoes, onion etc.). Bacteria also fall into this category (Jaini 1979, 108-10, Glasenapp 1991, 53).
2. *Two-sensed living beings (dvīndriya jīvas)* possess the senses of touch and taste, and include animals such as worms, shellfish, leeches etc.
3. *Three-sensed living beings (trīndriya jīvas)* possess the additional sense of smell and include bugs, ants, moths and so on.
4. *Four-sensed living beings (caturindriya jīvas)* add the sense of sight and include crickets, spiders, flies, bees, mosquitoes etc. (Glasenapp 1991, 54-5).
5. *Five-sensed living beings (pañcendriya jīvas)* possess all the five senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing and include beings such as birds, lions, fish, cows (as well as humans, heavenly, and hellish beings) (Jaini 1979, 110).

In connection with the doctrine of non-violence the Jains developed an understanding that the higher the number of senses in a living being, the more inauspicious any violence towards it, and more ‘bad’ *karma* attached to one’s soul. The word *ahiṃsā* is etymologically composed of two parts – ‘*hiṃsā*’ meaning injury or harm, and ‘*a-*’ meaning its negation (Grimes 1996) – together forming the meaning of non-violence. Though Jain doctrine recognizes the impossibility of absolute *ahimsa* in practical terms (one nevertheless has to breathe, move, eat, which

harms and destroys living beings), it advocates for carefulness and detachment as paths towards the elimination of unnecessary and the minimization of necessary violence (Jaini 2000, 6). It should also be noted that not only is a wilful participation in the carrying out of a harmful act considered *himsa*, but so is an intention which was not carried out, as well as an involuntary action (such as accidentally stepping on an ant), the latter being an expression of a general lack of awareness (Dundas 2002, 98).

As already mentioned, any act of *himsa* binds negative *karmas* to one's *jiv* and Jain doctrine takes on a very materialistic understanding of *karma*. It considers *karma* to be microscopic particles of matter, which get attached to the soul, when it experiences passions and attachments or engages in any sort of *himsic* activity (see Dundas 2002, 97; Jaini 1979, 112-3). Before a *karmic* particle gets associated with a soul, it is undifferentiated; after an interaction between a *karmic* particle and a soul, the *karma* gets differentiated into what could roughly be divided as harming *karmas*, which produce negative effect on the soul (e.g., predetermining an accident), and non-harming *karmas*, which produce neutral instead of negative effects on the *jiv* (like determining the length of one's life-span), though the neutral *karmas* are sometimes also construed as 'positive', if they result in a pleasant effect, such as a rebirth in a wealthy family or in one of the heavens (Dundas 2002, 99-100).

The aim of Jain practice is to stop the influx of all *karma* (both negative and neutral/positive) and shed all accumulated *karma* through austerities in order for the *jiv* to liberate itself from the continuous cycle of rebirth. Jainism views food as one of the most frequent causes of influx of negative *karma*: because every living being has a soul, and because any harm caused towards a *jiv* for the purposes of sustenance is an act of *himsa*, the act of feeding oneself causes an influx of negative *karma* and keeps the soul in the bondage of *samsar*. By slaughtering a cow, killing a fish, harvesting a carrot, or even plucking a mango one is engaging in acts of harm towards living beings and acquiring the corresponding negative *karma*. Since the ultimate aim of a practicing Jain is to get rid of all *karma*, one wants to engage in the minimum amount of violence even when eating.

Jain Dietary Prohibitions

As one's act of *himsa* towards another living being (and the subsequent influx of *karma*) is greater the more senses a living being has, the Jain doctrine prohibits consuming any two-, three-, four-, and five-sensed living beings as sources of nourishment. The only class of living beings allowed to be consumed are one-sensed living beings, which prescribes vegetarianism to all practicing Jains, as the only edible *jivs* among the one-sensed living beings are plants. Nevertheless, various other foods, which would otherwise be considered as one-sensed living beings (and therefore allowed for consumption) have been proscribed to Jains as well.

Systematizations of such proscribed foods, usually called *abhakṣyas* (literally, not to be eaten), have appeared around the 10th or 11th centuries CE and usually include a list of sixteen or twenty-two things not to be eaten. The first mention of such a list comes from the work *Pravacana-sāroddhāra* of Nemicandra composed in the 11th century (Cort 2001, 128), which mentions twenty-two such prohibited foods, the standard enumeration contemporary Jains would be most familiar with. In addition to three bigger categories (i.e., four banned *vikṛtis*, food eaten at night, and *ananta-kāyas*), which will be explored shortly, Nemicandra's list of *abhakṣyas* prohibits the consumption of various earth- and water-bodied beings⁹⁴ that are not vital for survival, poisonous and toxic substances (such as nicotine), multi-seeded fruits,⁹⁵ certain classes of foods such as pickles,⁹⁶ aubergines,⁹⁷ Ficus fruits,⁹⁸ buttermilk in tiny lumps,⁹⁹ non-nourishing and unknown fruits (because they do not satisfy hunger, though still cause *himsa*, or are potentially prohibited or poisonous), and spoiled foodstuffs (as they breed bacteria).

⁹⁴ Items like sand, dirt, clay, etc. are prohibited because they include innumerable earth-bodied beings and might contain embryos of other animals with more sense organs (salt is expressly excluded from the list). Foodstuffs like snow or ice are forbidden because their consumption necessitates the destruction of an innumerable number of water-bodied *jivs*, while not being essential for survival – unlike water (Siddhasena Suri in Williams 1983, 111).

⁹⁵ Fruits like figs are prohibited due to the risk of destroying each *jiv* contained in an individual seed.

⁹⁶ They breed innumerable organisms after three days, or sooner if not properly dried in the sun (Cort 2001, 129).

⁹⁷ Presumably prohibited due to their aphrodisiac properties and provoking a tendency to sleep too much (Williams 1983, 111).

⁹⁸ Presumably “full of innumerable tiny insects and invisible living organisms” (Williams 1983, 53).

⁹⁹ Contains “organisms so minute that they can be discerned only by a *kevalin* [an omniscient]” (Williams 1983, 111).

The most interesting are the wider categories, such as the ban on consumption of four *vikṛtis*: butter, alcohol, honey, and meat. They are each believed to cause great harm to minute living beings in the process of their production, while the minute beings continue to perpetually breed within them afterward as well and thus the purchase, storing, and consumption of these items implicates the individual in the countless deaths of these beings and the consequential negative *karma* (Williams 1983, 39-40, 54-5). The second interesting category is the prohibition on any food eaten after sunset – *rātri-bhojana* foods are prohibited because one cannot see one's food very well in the dark and might therefore accidentally ingest an insect landed on a morsel of food or cause some other harm to living beings due to one's carelessness (Cort 2002, 129). Today *rātri-bhojana* is usually substantiated as being bad for one's health and particularly vital in the times before the invention of electricity, when visibility after sunset was lower (and thus the potential ingestion of insects likelier) and the insects attracted to the flame of a candle could be burnt by its flame.

Lastly, the *ananta-kāyas* are a special category of plants, which are inhabited by an infinite number of living beings – unlike the majority of plants, which are inhabited only by individual *jivs*, the *jivs* in *ananta-kāyas* take on a collective form of embodiment and are thus ingested in multitude. *Ananta-kāyas* are prohibited due to the violence involved in preparing and consuming such multi-*jiv* plants, as by consuming a single article of *ananta-kāya* food, one is implicated in violence comparable to killing an innumerable number of *jivs*. In general the list of thirty-two *ananta-kāyas* includes many underground plants (yams, onion, wild onion, turmeric, ginger, garlic, carrot, radish, beetroot,...) and some other plants (like cardamom, tamarind, bamboo, immature shoots of any kind, mushrooms or other edible fungi, sprouted pulses or grains, grassweed, nutgrass, and so on) (see Williams 1983, 113-6). As Williams (1983, 114) writes: “[t]hose plants which are classified as *ananta-kāyas* seem to be chosen because of certain morphological peculiarities such as the possession of bulbs or rhizomes or the habit of periodically shedding their leaves; and in general they are characterized by possibilities of vegetative reproduction.” Most of the items on the list are also plants whose edible parts are capable of regenerating a new plant and therefore the result of consuming the edible part is the death of the entire organism (Cort 2001, 129). Many contemporary Jains also list the

disturbance of *jivs* living in the soil around the plants as the reasons for not eating root vegetables included under the *ananta-kāyas*.

Coupled with the above prohibitions on the consumption of *abhakṣya* foodstuffs is the ban on unfiltered water, as water is believed to contain innumerable minute living beings (besides the water-bodied beings), the ingestion of which would cause much *himsa* and accumulation of negative *karma* (Williams 1983, 113). To prevent this unnecessary influx of *karma*, the Jains filter, or more often boil their water, which prevents the birth of infinite invisible *jivs*; since the amount of *himsa* involved in boiling the water is much smaller than the *himsa* involved in drinking unpurified water, the Jains are required to drink boiled water, or *garam pāṇī*, in their day-to-day life (Cort 2002, 131).

Food Proscriptions in Practice

The above list of twenty-two *abhakṣyas* is the doctrinal enumeration of foods that are not to be eaten by Jains. In practice, however, the enumeration of proscribed foods takes on a different, perhaps less complicated form. Jains would usually not be acquainted with the full list of *abhakṣyas* (especially not in diaspora) and would instead be familiar with different groups of foodstuffs that they are not allowed to consume. The most prominent and most widely respected prohibition would be the one on animal flesh – the eating of meat most clearly transgresses the basic Jain teaching of *ahimsa* – and practically all Jains subscribe to a vegetarian diet. Furthermore, eggs are counted as non-vegetarian (as are by other Indians as well), since they embody the potential of life and therefore by eating an egg, one is stifling that potential from growing into a life form. Alcohol is also an item many Jains abstain from, not only because it clouds one's judgement and might lead to *himsa* being mistakenly caused, but also because innumerable microscopic beings are killed in the process of making it.

In addition to the above 'fundamental' categories of foodstuffs Jains typically abstain from, the next big class of proscribed items are the root vegetables – not only the ones specified above, but *all* root vegetables. Either understood to embody innumerable living beings, or abstained from because harvesting them harms the organisms living on and around the plant as well as killing the entire plant itself, the

prohibition on root vegetables is adopted by many (particularly religious) Jains (especially in non-diasporic environments of India). Then come the groups of fruits and vegetables less clearly understood and less often abstained from – some fruits with many seeds (though not all), certain over-ground vegetables that can be hiding places for smaller insects (such as broccoli or cauliflower), foodstuffs that include yeast (like bread), and a few other miscellaneous food items (such as ice, butter [though *ghee*, or clarified butter, is doctrinally acceptable and generously used], honey, aubergines, and sprouts).

The prohibition on *rātri-bhojana*, or foods eaten after sunset, is generally seen as a somewhat optional specification and not practiced by numerous Jains, or might only be adopted at select times of the year (such as during *caturmas*, the rainy season, or on particularly auspicious days, such as *tithis*). The requirement of drinking only filtered or boiled water (*garam pānī*) plays an important role particularly in Jain households close to *upashravs*, which are the potential sites of ascetic alms giving,¹⁰⁰ and is widespread in India, where water shortages and suboptimal water systems encourage water purification in all (not only Jain) households. Outside of the above (more pragmatic) categories, foodstuffs would generally be seen as acceptable to eat – at least until told otherwise by ascetics or more knowledgeable lay people. Of course, not all Jains follow the dietary proscriptions to the same extent and people choose various things to eat based on their knowledge, determination, and convenience.

Another element of Jain dietary practices, which I will mention only briefly, is the partial or complete refrainment from food in the form of fasting. The Jain tradition has developed a stunning range of fasting practices and Jains engage in some sort of food abstention in impressive numbers. Fasts of all sorts – eating twice a day (*beāsana*), eating once a day (*ekāsana*), eating bland food once a day (*āyambīl*), not eating at all (*upavāsa*), not consuming anything but water for eight days (*atthay*), alternating between *upavāsas* and *ekāsanas* (or *beāsanas*) for over a year (*varṣī tapas*), progressively increasing the number of *āyambīl* days ending in an *upavāsa* until one reaches a hundred *āyambīls* (one *āyambīl* + one *upavāsa*, two

¹⁰⁰ Jain ascetics follow *all* dietary proscriptions listed above and only accept food that complies with all the regulations on food preparation and storage. Therefore, the presence of ascetics influences the food consumption in lay households close by.

āyambils + one *upavāsa*, three *āyambils* + one *upavāsa*, until one hundred *āyambils* + one *upavāsa*), and even anywhere between thirty to one hundred and eighty days of not eating – they all serve the same purpose: to stop the influx of new *karma* through consuming food, shed some of the existing *karma* through practicing austerities (*tapa*), and developing restraint and self-discipline (see Cort 2001, 128; Dundas 2002, 199-200; Jaini 2010g).

Vows to abstain from particular items of food for a set amount of time or until a pre-specified set of circumstances occur (e.g., not eating mangoes for a year or until making a pilgrimage to a particular place) are also common among the Jains, though they fall under the category of vows or pledges (*bandh*). *Bandh* (also *niyam* or *bādhā*) is “a voluntary pledge to restrict in some manner one's nonreligious activity, to be extra diligent in some regular religious activity, or to practice some additional religious activity” (Cort 2001, 127), which could include vows limiting one's number of clothing items, specifying a number of *samayiks* one has to perform in a year, or pledging to clean the *garbha-griha* at specified intervals.

Semiotics of Jain Food

Having explored the doctrinal elaborations of Jain food proscriptions and their typical implementations in practice, we now turn to a semiotic analysis of Jain dietary practices – examining the symbolic role of food, we will trace the overt and more subtle changes that Jain food practices are undergoing in Leicester. I will argue that the importance of food for Jain practice lies not only in its doctrinal entanglement with the concept of *ahimsa*, but with more mundane functions of inclusion/exclusion and social status as well.

In her essay *The Jain Plate: The Semiotics of the Diaspora Diet* (2004) Anne Vallely highlighted the fact that the “Jain dietary discourse is an expression of the ideology of *moksha-marga* – the path of liberation” (ibid., 9), which communicates the desire to minimise *himsa* involved in sustaining life, and is the site “where ethics and worldview become embodied and enacted” (ibid., 7). By abstaining from *abhakṣyas*, Vallely wrote, Jains are “using their bodies to speak the language of *moksha-marga*” (ibid., 10), and communicating “a singular desire to detach oneself from worldly existence, and pursue a path of self-realisation” (ibid., 7). Focusing on

changes in the Jain dietary discourse among North American Jains, Vallely argued that the diasporic dietary discourse is less tied to renunciation and asceticism and is instead guided by ‘socially-motivated *ahimsa*’ (i.e., avoiding animal cruelty and gaining self control, instead of reducing one’s *karma*) and a ‘new category of *abhakṣyas*’ (which primarily concern animal products of all kinds, leading the North American Jains towards veganism)¹⁰¹ (ibid., 17-18).

In her analysis Vallely stopped short of digging below the surface of doctrinal explanations of Jain dietary practices (i.e., food as a source of *himsa* and thus connected to perpetuating the cycle of rebirth) and the food discourse present in diasporic Jain communities (though her concepts of ‘socially-motivated *ahimsa*’ and the ‘new category of *abhakṣyas*’ make important contributions to our thinking of dietary changes in Jain diaspora). Although she hinted at the differentiating function food performs to set apart the Jain community in India (ibid., 7, 11-12, 15-17) – which we will explore below – Vallely left out a closer examination of the social role consumption of (and abstinence from) food plays in Jain communities.

My own analysis of Jain dietary practices picks up where Vallely’s left off and does that with the work of Mary Douglas, quoted by Vallely as well. Although Vallely referenced Douglas’s book *Natural Symbols* (1970) when saying that “food restrictions reflect concerns about maintaining the boundaries of the social group” and “are really about ensuring limited interaction with those outside the group, and with maintaining fixed social boundaries” (Vallely 2004, 20), I want to draw attention to Douglas’ essay *Deciphering a Meal* (1999 [1972]), where she analysed the meals in her own home and pointed out that food is a code, where “[t]he message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries” (ibid., 231). Food – not only in terms of meals, but also food-related practices, and food proscriptions – therefore serves to create boundaries of inclusion/exclusion (boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’), communicates who is included in and excluded from a group (be it family or religious community), and signals the hierarchy of individuals within the group

¹⁰¹ While Vallely implies that the trend towards veganism is equally strong in the UK that is not the case. Despite efforts to promote veganism by a group of London Jains (one of them being Ashok, whom we met in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*), there are few vegan Jains and they are typically found in London and chiefly among the young adult population.

based on elements such as the quality and quantity of their food (who gets the best items and how much), the serving order within a meal (higher status individuals get served earlier), and the items they consume (who eats or avoids particular foodstuffs).

The two functions of food Douglas identified – the *differentiating function* that creates boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, and the *ordering function* that signals and grants status within the internal hierarchy of the group (the names of functions are mine) – can be represented by the cone below, where the base circle represents the delineation of the group by the differentiating function of food, and the vertical dimension of the cone depicts the food's status-granting ordering function.

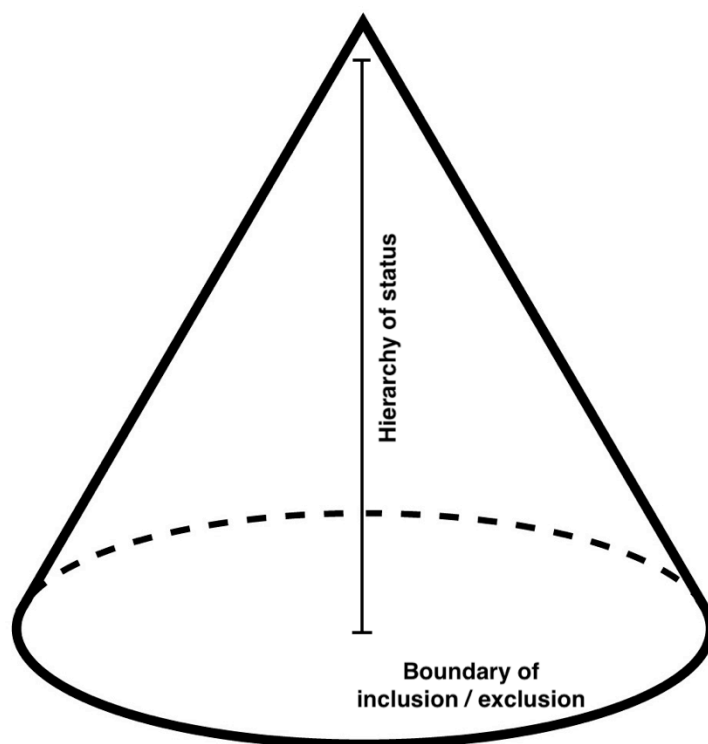


Image 20: Food creates boundaries and signals hierarchies (image by the author)

Douglas's work has remained relevant in the field of semiotics and food studies, and has recently been updated with the addition of a third function by Kathryn A. Johnson, Andrew A. White, Brenna M. Boyd, and Adam B. Cohen (Johnson et al. 2011). They proposed a functionalistic framework for understanding religio-cultural practices and claimed that dietary practices originate and persist in groups largely

because of three functions they perform. The *differentiating function*¹⁰² (through the consumption of unique food items or the establishment of common food rituals within a group [ibid., 1423-1424]), the *ordering function* (by feasting, consuming rare or prestige foods, adopting food taboos, dietary restrictions, fasting, or by insisting on special methods of food preparation and the serving order within the meal [ibid., 1425-1426]), and what I have termed the *health function*. Johnson et al. (ibid., 1426-1427) claimed that dietary practices help individuals avoid disease by promoting or prohibiting specific practices from food collection and preparation to consumption (e.g., washing and cleansing food, sterilizing food preparation utensils, norms regulating food consumption, etc.). While we can see the applicability of the health function in Jain food regulations – especially in connection with the requirement of drinking boiled or filtered water, avoiding unknown fruits, foods that have ‘gone off,’ old food items like pickles, or even not eating after sunset (thought to be bad for digestion, especially among more ‘scientifically-minded’ Jains) – I will not dwell on this particular dimension of their model.

Instead, I want to argue that the Jain food prohibitions were symbolically used to delineate out-group boundaries and create a distinctly Jain community (particularly in Gujarat, where the surrounding Hindu community is also vegetarian). The differentiating function of dietary regulations persisted in diaspora as well, although in an altered manner – since the surrounding population of Leicester Jains was largely meat-eating and unfamiliar with Jain dietary rules, the differentiating function lost some of its importance (particularly in relation to vegetable prohibitions), while the ordering function gained prominence in the other function’s absence. The symbolism associated with Jain prohibitions on consumption of root vegetables in Leicester was therefore primarily one of establishing degrees of a person’s religiosity within the Jain community – Jains who were not as religious would not usually go out of their way to follow most Jain food rules, while very religious people would make sure to structure their lives around Jain rules of conduct, including the rules on food consumption.¹⁰³

¹⁰² The names of individual functions are again mine.

¹⁰³ It should also be noted that dietary rules generally run parallel with rules of endogamy. By endogamous procreation the boundaries of the community are further reinforced and both dietary

The Ordering Function

Similarly to Douglas and Johnson et al., Arjun Appadurai in his essay *Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia* (1981) argued that food can “serve two diametrically opposed semiotic functions” – it can “serve to indicate and construct social relations characterized by equality, intimacy, or solidarity; or, it can serve to sustain relations characterized by rank, distance, or segmentation” (ibid., 496). Appadurai also noted that in South Asia “[f]ood avoidances, for different persons in different contexts, are developed to a remarkably high degree and can signal caste or sect affiliation, life-cycle stages, gender distinctions, and aspirations toward higher status” (ibid., 495) – not only within the community at question, but to its outsiders as well. As Cort (2001, 128) wrote in the case of Gujarati Jains, the Jain dietary restrictions “constitute one of the hallmarks of the tradition for most Indians,” and in Gujarat “Jains probably have more of a reputation for being choosy eaters than do Brahmans.” The ‘secondary interdictions’ of Jain dietary practice (referring to dietary restrictions beyond vegetarianism [Mahias 1985]), and in particular the restriction on root vegetables, therefore signal a community boundary, one that delineates Jains from everyone else.

When Jains migrated outside of Gujarat and settled in England, they found themselves in a country that was predominantly meat-eating and generally unaware of Jain dietary prohibitions. As such, the markers of difference were no longer set along the lines of avoiding root vegetables, but now became elements such as ethnicity, dress, accent, and so on. Since vegetarianism was not particularly widespread among the non-Jain population of Leicester (and England more broadly), it became a signifier strong enough to differentiate the Jain community as a separate community on its own, without the help of the secondary interdiction of not eating root vegetables. Many Leicester Jains therefore began eating root vegetables, not only because they no longer symbolically differentiated them from non-Jains, but also because meals without onions, garlic, potatoes, or other root vegetables were hard to come by in English restaurants. Unless willing to forego eating outside one’s

rules and rules of endogamy help differentiate a community from other communities in the area (see Beardsworth and Keil 2002, 73-99; Olivelle 1995).

home altogether, Leicester Jains had to become more flexible in their dietary restrictions, as Rushabh and Vidhya mentioned:

I get told a lot by some of the religious elders, if you like, [...] that, you know, you should abstain from potatoes, onions, carrots, garlic,.. But I think it's just... We've been brought up here, eating them when you go to school. The vegetarian options are those with root vegetables. So they're very common and they're difficult to avoid. Not gonna say they're unavoidable, but they are difficult to avoid. (Rushabh)

The religion teaches you to do as much as you can, but when you're in a situation, where is hard for you to get things or for general life, then you have to adapt to what you've got. Not to an extreme, but when it comes to food and things like that a lot of people would adapt to it here. Not necessarily going to the non-vegetarian bit, but you're not supposed to eat onion and garlic, but most people here will do. Just generally, I think, a lot of mentality's changed over time. (Vidhya)

While the differentiating function of food lost its importance in Leicester, the ordering, status-signalling function of Jain dietary practice remained important and perhaps even accentuated in the absence of its partner. Being one among the few in Leicester familiar with their dietary rules, the Jains began using food as a signifier of personal religiosity in a more pronounced way and hierarchically stratified their community based on religiosity of its members (as can also be gleaned from the above vignette [*My First Visit*]). While in practice the ordering function of food consumption/abstinence was not ubiquitous in the Leicester Jain community, it was nevertheless visible enough to be remarked upon. Jinesh, a man in his early thirties, responded to my questions whether people's dietary habits reflect how religious they were by saying:

I think there is a certain element of it, because you'd have to be pretty religious, and your faith and your beliefs to be that much stronger for you to want to give it up and go through all the effort. Because it is effort, it is inconvenience and people don't want inconvenience. So you'd have to be fairly religious and fairly strong-minded to say "yeah, no, I shouldn't be eating this, so I'm not gonna eat it." But it doesn't necessarily mean that because you don't eat something, you're more religious than somebody else. But I will say, on a scale it's probably more likely.

The foodstuffs one gives up in one's day-to-day life were thus seen as symbolic indicators of one's religiosity and commitment to Jainism and there was a relatively standard progression of dietary abstinence that was common among Leicester Jains. The vast majority of the Jains in Leicester did not consume animal flesh and were vegetarian – while I heard people lamenting over Jains who had started eating meat, I never actually met one or had any pointed out to me. Many people also avoided eggs – some in the form of banning only eggs as stand alone dishes, while still eating them in cakes, others abstaining from them altogether (though that was generally recognised to be difficult in England). Next came the stages of abstaining from root vegetables: some gave up onions and garlic in their diet, fewer gave up potatoes in addition to onions and garlic, and fewer still abstained from all root vegetables. Such Jains were few and generally limited to the older generation, which was also more active in the Leicester Jain Centre (as discussed in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*). The progressive avoidance of food items among the Jains and the corresponding rise in displays of religiosity can be depicted with the diagram below.

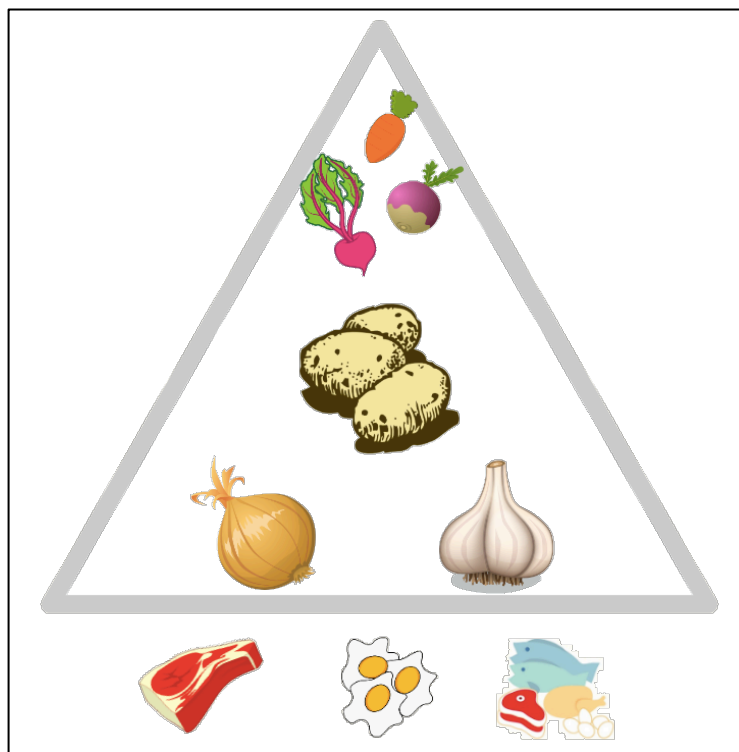


Image 21: Ordering function of Jain food avoidances (image by the author)

The above association of particular food items with different levels of religious commitment was not only characteristic of Leicester Jains, but also of Jains living in Gujarat (based on my experience from Jamnagar). There was a general stratification of root vegetables common to both (and arguably all) Jain communities that progresses from eating all root vegetables, through abstaining from firstly onions and garlic, and then potatoes as well, to avoiding root vegetables altogether. Ishitaben (whom we met above), remarked on an amusing anecdote from her trip to India.

Even in India [...] when we go to eat outside in restaurants, I was quite surprised. It's very common for people like us, who obviously don't eat non-veg, they are vegetarians, but they still eat potatoes and some of the root vegetables and carrots and stuff. The next stage they do ... I mean the first stage is that they sometimes give up on garlic and onion, because that's the next thing that they regard as you should not be eating, so there are a lot of people, who would not eat onions and garlic, but they still eat potatoes. So when we went to the restaurant [in India] and we said that we want Jain food, they said "are you 50-50 Jains?" I found that very funny. [...] Which means: "do you eat potatoes and everything, but just not onions and garlic, or do you don't eat anything?" I found that very funny. But that is not uncommon, that is very common – that people try and adopt as much as they can, basically.

Jain food in both India and England was a potent marker of an individual's religiosity, especially so in Leicester. Abstinence from particular items of food communicated an individual's commitment to Jainism and thus brought them a level of authority on religious matters in the community. I want to argue that the knowledge of Jain dietary restrictions and the implementation of the food proscriptions (particularly the 'secondary interdictions' of root vegetables) in practice is an example of cultural capital that an individual possessed and could then be translated into prestige, authority, and a degree of power (i.e., symbolic capital) within the Leicester Jain community. Pierre Bourdieu identified cultural capital as one of four broader groups of capital – others being economic (money, material goods, land, and other properties), social (networks of relationships with other people), and symbolic capital (prestige, authority, renown, and power) (see Moore 2008) – and existing in three forms: *objectified* cultural capital is materially represented in objects an individual possesses, the *institutionalised* form of cultural

capital are their qualifications, diplomas, titles, and other institutional recognitions, and the *embodied* cultural capital are the principles of consciousness, behavioural tendencies, and specific knowledge that an individual systematically acquires over time and are incorporated within the corporeality of the person, exhibited through body language, paraverbal and nonverbal communication patterns, and lifestyle choices (see Bourdieu 1983, Power 1999). Progressive abstaining from particular food items (especially root vegetables) was therefore a form of embodied cultural capital in the Leicester Jain community. By abstaining from a greater amount of food items, an individual Leicester Jain displayed a greater familiarity with Jain dietary rules and a greater commitment to Jainism in general, thus accumulating the cultural capital with the community. With the accumulation of thus-acquired cultural capital, the status of the individual within the community rose, and they were able to translate their cultural capital into symbolic capital (i.e., prestige, authority, renown, and power), in order to exert influence over particular decisions, practices, or elements of the Leicester Jain community.

The Differentiating Function

The differentiating function of food for Jains in Leicester fell mostly on the borders of vegetarianism – while the vast majority of people in Leicester ate meat, the Leicester Jains abstained from it and were able to assert their difference and in-group identity through abstaining from animal flesh (and occasionally eggs and alcohol). The avoidance of root vegetables was far less widespread among Leicester Jains than among Jains in Gujarat, which was primarily due to the changes in their social environment: with fewer vegetarians around, vegetarianism itself became a powerful differentiating feature, making secondary interdictions less important in England.

In India (and especially in Jamnagar), vegetarianism itself did not provide enough of a difference between Jains and non-Jains. As noted by Vallely (2004, 11), “[f]or many Jains in India, vegetarianism, in and of itself, is not a particularly powerful signifier of the *moksha-marga*, or of religious identity. Though certainly not universally embraced in India, vegetarianism is a common practice.” That is particularly the case in Gujarat, which is an overwhelmingly vegetarian state – according to some estimates more than ninety per cent of Gujaratis are vegetarian

(Sen 2006), though recent census data counted somewhere around 60% of Gujaratis to be vegetarian (Kaushik 2016).¹⁰⁴ With a widespread predominance of vegetarians in the state, the difference between the Jains and the other Gujarati vegetarians was primarily communicated by the secondary interdictions of the Jain diet. In particular, the abstinence from root vegetables became the primary differentiating feature setting apart the Jains from other Gujaratis. While ‘everyone’ was vegetarian, only the Jains did not eat potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, ginger, and so on.¹⁰⁵ By abstaining from root vegetables in particular, the Jains were therefore drawing a symbolic boundary between themselves and the rest of the non-Jain Gujarati population. Of course, the Gujarati vegetarians (both Jain and non-Jain) were further differentiated from those Gujaratis, who did eat meat (i.e., the non-Jain non-vegetarians), creating further boundaries of (dis)affiliation and social distance.

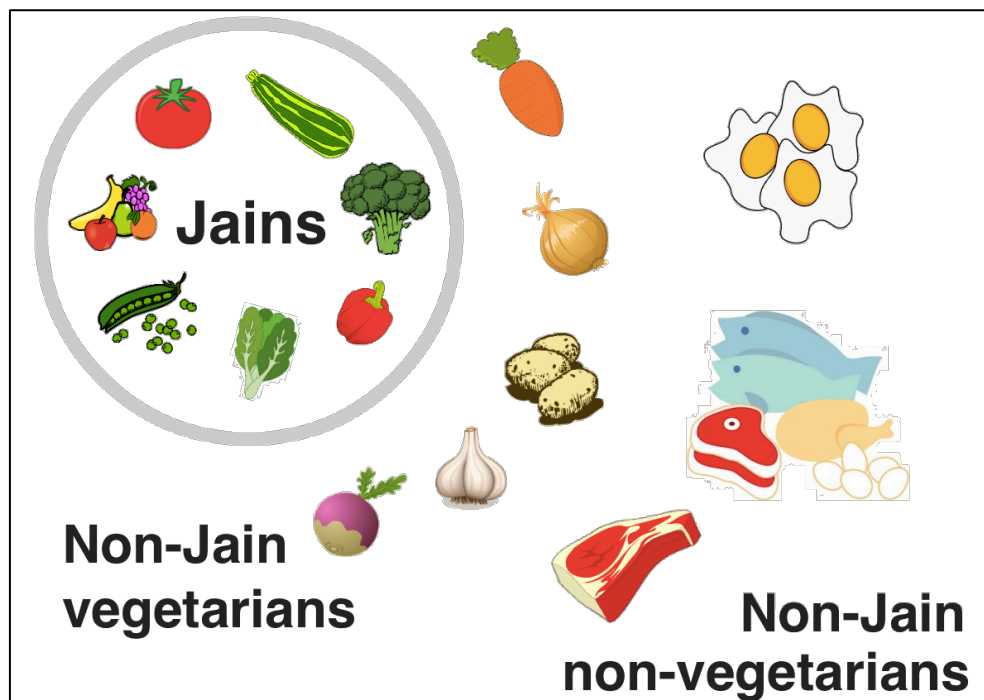


Image 22: Differentiating function of Jain food (image by the author)

¹⁰⁴ Gujarat claims to be a predominantly vegetarian state, supposedly in honour of Mohandas Gandhi, who was born in the Gujarati town of Porbandar, though the vegetarian policies are more likely due to the Hinduisation initiatives of the locally popular Bharatiya Janata Party (Nag 2017).

¹⁰⁵ The Swaminarayan branch of Hinduism also abstains from onion and garlic, though not other root vegetables. The Jamnagar Jains ordinarily enjoyed going to the Swaminarayan temple on the outskirts of the city to enjoy a meal at the temple’s canteen – since onion and garlic were already eliminated from the menu, they felt a dietary closeness to this group that they did not otherwise experience.

The following of Jain dietary rules therefore communicated group-affiliation, in-group membership, inclusion, connection, and closeness – following a Jain diet confirmed one’s membership in the broader Jain community and communicated that belonging to the out-group of non-Jain Gujaratis. Conversely, not following the Jain food proscriptions signalled a drifting across community boundaries and an erosion of established differences between Jains and non-Jains. Of course, not all Jains followed the doctrinal ban on root vegetables (enabling food to signal levels of religiosity and religious identification, as discussed above) and the everyday practices of Jains were further complicated by the religious calendar and the associated fasting patterns. Yet I would speculate that the need to signal difference through dietary practices in Jamnagar (and elsewhere in India) arose from the desire to (continuously) establish Jainism as a distinct religious tradition and further differentiate it from the predominant Hinduism(s). With the historic tendency of mainstream Hinduism (or Brahmanism) to assimilate various external religious beliefs and practices into its corpus (see Doniger 2014, 36-37, 52-53), the identity of Jains as a distinct social and religious group was protected and communicated through food practices and particularly distinct food avoidances. The Jainism-specific dietary restrictions simultaneously signalled distinction as well as group cohesion, protected group boundaries as well as expressed group identity, while also allowing Jains to act in the surrounding (predominantly Hindu) world without major hindrances to their lifestyle (and business).

The avoidance of root vegetables in Jain households was further enforced by the presence of ascetics in Gujarat. Since Jain ascetics only accept food that complies with *all* Jain dietary regulations (both in terms of substance and preparation), and because lay Jains are typically eager to offer alms to ascetics, Gujarati households would generally regulate their culinary practices according to the dietary demands set by ascetics. Regardless of whether or not ascetics were actually staying nearby (and could thus come for alms), their symbolic presence enforced stricter dietary observances among the lay Jains in Gujarat. With the absence of ascetics in England, no such “external regulatory force” (Vallely 2004, 15) existed and dietary rules became laxer among the diasporic Jain communities, as discussed above.

Conclusion: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

Although the attentiveness to Jain dietary proscriptions differs between diasporic and non-diasporic contexts – both in the level of their adoption as well as the subtle changes in the social function of food – there are nevertheless noticeable continuities in the deployment of food in the Leicester Jain community and the non-diasporic communities such as the one I encountered in Jamnagar. Although so far this thesis has been mostly occupied with the question of change and has not explicitly addressed continuity in the Leicester Jain community, that does not signify the absence of continuity per se. Most elements of religious change also carry features of religious continuity. In the case of food, those are the progressions of food abstinences (from vegetarian, through selective abstaining from specific root vegetables, to the avoidance of root vegetables altogether), as well as the general contours of semiotic functions of food consumptions (although the boundaries of the differentiating function have shifted towards vegetarianism, the ordering functions has remained the same, though arguably more pronounced). The fact that elements of Leicester Jainism exhibit change, therefore means they also exhibit visible signs of continuity – it could even be argued that the more they change, the more they stay the same.

We could claim the same type of continuity in regards to the worship space of the Leicester Jain Centre as well. Although the multi-sectarian worship space is certainly atypical of the Gujarati environment, the elements in individual spaces of mono-sectarian worship are recognisably in line with the traditional Jain architecture and décor, even if slightly altered to fit the smaller space and colder weather of Leicester. The boundaries between sacred and profane spaces (particularly in terms of vertical ascension towards the sacred, and symbolic barriers in terms of doorways and clothing) mimic the corresponding boundaries of Indian Jain temples, as do the hidden hierarchies within the Leicester Jain community. Due to the numerical, architectural, and ritual visibility of Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar, the Derawasi Jainism was – to a certain degree – seen as more normative in non-diasporic spaces as well. Since the numerical strength of non-Derawasi communities was big enough in Jamnagar to sustain mono-sectarian worship spaces and practices, the Derawasi

normativity was not as pronounced, though it nevertheless shared the same features as the Leicester Jain community's: the dominance of the local Derawasi Jains in terms of greater numbers, greater visibility of their ritual expression (having a greater arsenal of rituals, as well as regular public processions), and a bigger claim of real-estate either in the form of more individual temples (in Jamnagar) or a larger proportion of the multi-sectarian space (in Leicester). With the Derawasi Jainism being positioned towards the hegemonic centre of Jainism in both environments, other branches of Jainism were thus pushed towards the community's margins.

Yet while there are several margins within the Leicester Jain community, it is important to recognise that these margins are tucked into the larger periphery in which the whole Leicester Jain (and even English Jain) population exists – folded into the margins of global Jainism with its centre of activity in India. The English Jains living on the periphery of global Jainism have no access to ascetics, fewer co-religionists and worship spaces available, and have to adapt to different socio-behavioural expectations from their surroundings. They are in a doubly problematic position: not only are they seen as 'others' in England, their country of settlement, they are also on the margins of their own global religious community centred in India and the way Jainism is practiced there.

By being physically removed from the lands of traditional settlement of Jainism, being smaller in size and recognisability, and not being able to access the traditional figures of religious authority, the Leicester Jains (as well as other diasporic groups of Jains around the world) are seen as deviating from the Indian norm and therefore not being part of the hegemonic centre of Jainism. And it is this hegemonic centre that we turn to next. In the chapter *Echoes from India* we will transport ourselves to a mid-sized town in rural Gujarat and reflect on the difference between Leicester Jainism and the way Jainism is practiced in Jamnagar. By keeping the two field-sites in conversation with each other, we will look at the roles of worship spaces, the power of ascetic presence/absence, and the influence of social environment on the practice of Jainism in the diasporic and non-diasporic contexts at hand. With this reflexive examination of religious change in Jain diaspora, we will bring our ethnographic chapters full circle and conclude where we started – in Gujarat, where most Leicester Jains' ancestors emigrated from.

Chapter 6

Echoes from India

Vignette: A Birthday Puja

I celebrated my twenty-sixth birthday in Jamnagar. There was not much of a celebration, but the Mehta family, who warmly welcomed me into their home, decided that I should start this new year of my life right, so they invited me for breakfast and told me to bring some fresh clothes that I can use for *puja*. I packed my newly bought *sari* and walked among the racketing rickshaws, stray cows, and past a few blocks of flats to arrive at their home, where they awaited me with a typical Jamnagari breakfast – *gathiya*, a heap of deep-fried chickpea flour blobs served with a side of spicy raw papaya that they knew I adore, and *jalebi*, an orange swirl of delicious sweetness. After a family breakfast I was ushered into the shower room and given a bucket of warm water to clean myself, since the rules of the *puja* demand that I have not eaten or used the toilet before the ritual. With my body clean and my hair still wet, I put on the matching blouse and petticoat so that Shilpaben could help me with tying on my new orange *sari*, which flowed heavily around my ankles. Kicking the many pleats here and there I made my way to the living room, where I was told Yashvi, the youngest of the three daughters and only nine years of age, will be going to the *derasar* with me and guiding me in performing the *puja*. We kicked off our shoes and descended the stairs out of the Mehta apartment.

Yashvi and I walked the few dozen meters to the next-door *derasar* over rough concrete and dry dust, our feet accumulating dirt, which we washed away with water when we came to the *derasar* grounds. Yashvi greeted a few neighbours, bowed in front of the entrance, and hurried away to a small room holding ritual supplies, where she prepared a miniature container of sandalwood paste, sorted through a handful of flower blossoms brought by her friend, and fetched a metal plate to put them on, all with an automatic, well-practiced swiftness and confidence of someone who has done that an innumerable number of times. She walked beside me into the *derasar* and stopped in front of a chest in the middle of the room to circle the *muhpatti* I

brought with me over the flickering smoke of incense before we both tied the white pieces of cloth over our mouths and stepped into the inner sanctum.

Yashvi led me to the central *murti* and pointed to various spots where I was to touch the image with my ring finger dipped in the golden liquid of the sandalwood paste. Following her instructions I touched the brass knobs on the statues, first on the middle *murti* of Mahavir-swami, then the right statue of Chandra-prabhu, and lastly on Shanti-nath's *murti* to the left before following Yashvi outside of the inner sanctum and around the *derasar* and its grounds to perform further acts of obeisance to statues of *tirthankars*, deities, and *gurus*. While moving about the *derasar*, Yashvi pointed at certain things and explained this or that facet of her *puja* circuit – only boys are allowed to go into the Manibhadra's shrine, she does *puja* by herself every Sunday and goes to *pathshala* in the *upashray* next door almost every day, you have to touch the *siddha-chakra* first here, then here, and here. She felt completely at home at her local *derasar* and made her way around it with the sureness of someone who knows where to find any little thing she needs and has seen every corner of the temple she has likely visited every week since her birth. The *derasar* was simply a part of her everyday life, as routine as her school and as familiar as her home.

After we were done with the worship, Yashvi led me back to the 'kesar room' to wash our little bowl of golden *kesar* and the metal plate we used, before we concluded my birthday *puja* and made our way back to the Mehta residence for some more delicious *gathiya*.

* * *

While Jainism has existed in Leicester for about half a century and has a relatively small community of followers, it is rather more established in India – especially in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Mumbai, Delhi and parts of Southern India – where it has been practiced for centuries and has a proportionally bigger following. Jain temples (*derasars*), ascetic shelters (*upashrays*), and charitable, social, or religious organisations run by Jains abound in places like Jamnagar in the Indian state of Gujarat, where Jains have resided for at least half a millennium and constitute an influential local community. The practice of Jainism in Jamnagar has not been interrupted by the changes in social and cultural environment brought about by migration, and though certain practices have changed even among Jains living in

Jamnagar (and other Indian cities), they mostly occurred through internal reforms and innovation,¹⁰⁶ instead of external influences.

Therefore, in order to better understand the changes Jain beliefs and practices have undergone in diaspora, this chapter explores the practice of Jainism in Jamnagar and contrasts it with the diasporic environment of Leicester. It does so in order to tease out the changes engendered by diasporic practice of Jainism that are not necessarily visible if we examine only the Leicester context without contrasting it with its non-diasporic counterpart. Jamnagar – a city of approximately the same size as Leicester, the site of Banks’s ethnographic work in the 1980s (see Banks 1987, 1992), and the place of family connections for many of the Leicester Jains – was selected as the contrasting field site for my examination of religious change in Leicester Jainism. This chapter therefore aims to draw out the various influences of the social environment that are shaping religious expression in Leicester and Jamnagar by looking at the role of mono-sectarian worship spaces, analysing the influence of ascetic presence on lay practice, and directly comparing a smaller Jamnagar Jain sub-community with the Leicester Jains. But let us start with a brief introduction to the city of Jamnagar and its Jain inhabitants first.

Jamnagar, Gujarat

Jāmnaḡar (Guj. જામનગર, lit. ‘Jam’s city’) is a mid-sized town in rural Gujarat that was established in 1540 CE by Jām Rāval (Guj. જામ રાવલ) as the seat of a new princely state and bearing the name Nawnagar or ‘New City’ (Guj. નવાનગર) (Banks 1992, 39-42). Today, Jamnagar is the sixth largest city in Gujarat and the westernmost among them, as it lies on the west side of the Saurashtran Peninsula (Guj. સૌરાષ્ટ્ર) next to the Gulf of Kutch (Guj. કચ્છ). At the latest nation-wide census Jamnagar with its suburbs had just over 600,000 inhabitants (Jamnagar City Census 2011), though the number has likely increased since 2011 due to influxes from the

¹⁰⁶ For example, the Sthanakvasi and Terapanthi branches internally reformed Jainism in mid-17th and early 19th century respectively (see Dundas 2002, 245-262).

surrounding villages and the recent establishment of the Reliance Oil refinery's headquarters just outside Jamnagar, which has brought in people from further afield.

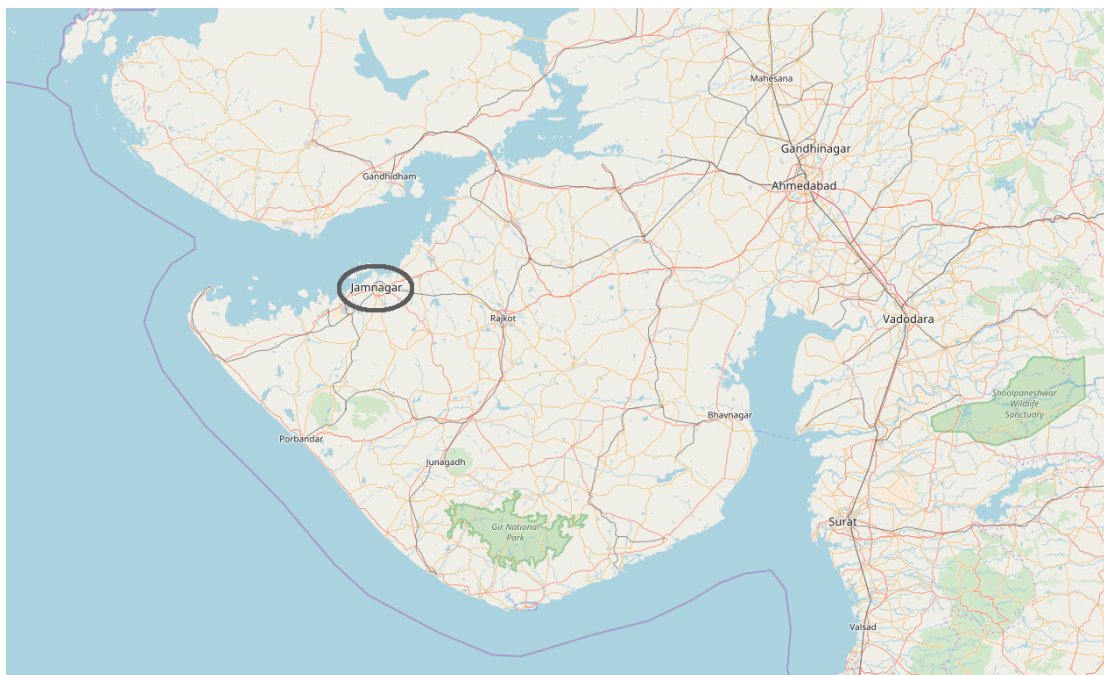


Image 23: Map of Gujarat (source: OpenStreetMap)

Despite its industrial importance and its status as the capital of the Jamnagar district (spreading across 14,000 km²), Jamnagar is a quintessentially rural and rather sleepy town, where an afternoon siesta is still a lovingly observed custom, the daily groceries are typically procured from a neighbourhood street vendor or a larger market in the vicinity, and seeing a camel-cart heading to the port is not an unusual occurrence. The apparent centre of Jamnagar is a mostly dry Lakhota Lake (Guj. લાખોટા તળાવ) split in half by a busy road and surrounded by a newly built walking area with a red tarmac walking path circling the lake (*Image 24*: top right). In recent years the monsoon had not brought enough rain to replenish the city's water reserves, leaving the Lakhota Lake almost completely empty and the Jamnagaris relying on water brought from Ahmedabad (Guj. અમદાવાદ), Gujarat's largest city 300 km east.

East of Lakhota Lake sit the jumbled streets of the historic city centre. The area, named after its once prominent silver market – Chandi Bajar (Guj. ચાંદી બજાર) – is a collection of sprawling outdoor markets blending one into another, small shops lining the streets, imposing archways and historic city gates towering over

pedestrians and buzzing mopeds, domes of Jain *derasars* sparkling in the dry sun, and numerous narrow streets harbouring bigger and smaller family residences (see Banks 1992, 44).

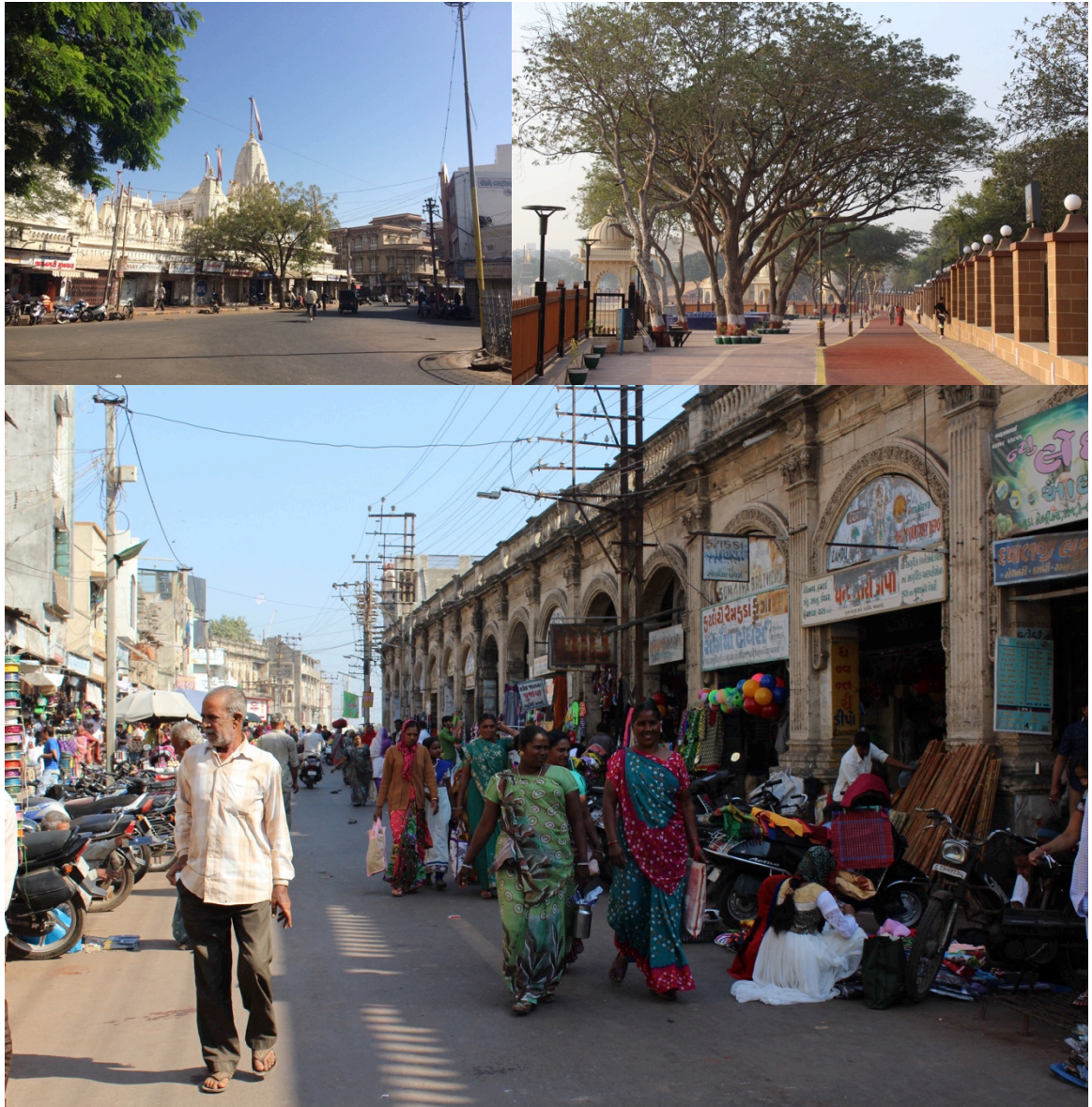


Image 24: Scenes from Jamnagar (images by the author)

Chandi Bajar is heavily dominated by Jain residences and their historic presence is visible in the white domes of Jain *derasars* overlooking the low skyline of the area (*Image 24*: top left). Most Jamnagar Jains live in the areas identified on the map below: Chandi Bajar and Pancheshwar Tower, which are in the old city on the east and north-east sides of Lakhota Lake; Digvijay Plot (Guj. દિગ્વિજય પ્લોટ) and Oswal

Colony (Guj. ઓસલાલ કોલોની) on the south and west shores of the Lake; comfortable residential areas of Kamdar Colony (Guj. કામદાર કોલોની) and Ranjit Nagar (Guj. રંજિત નગર) further west; and in the newer (and more affluent) neighbourhoods of DKV Area (named after Doshi Kalidas Virji College) and Patel Colony (Guj. પટેલ કોલોની) further north (cf. Banks 1992, 66).

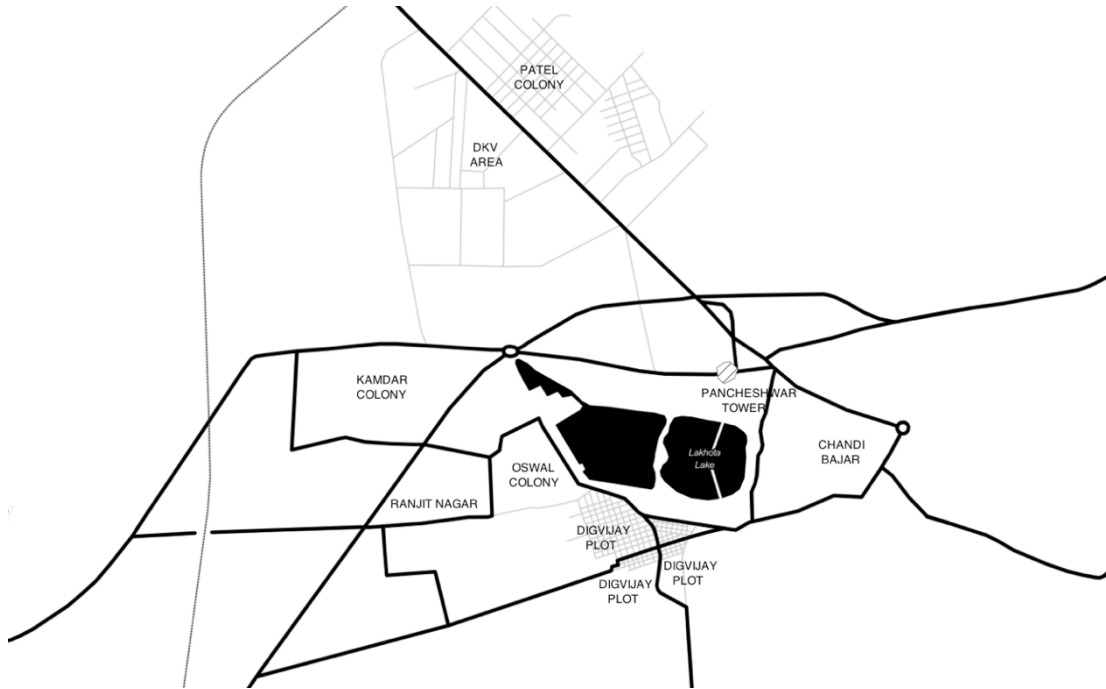


Image 25: Areas of Jain settlement in Jamnagar (source: Stamen Maps)

Prafullaben, an informed and respected figure in local Jain life, spoke about these areas of Jain settlement and provided more detail as to their social composition.

PRAFULLABEN: [Jains] live in Chandi Bajar, Digvijay Plot, Oswal Colony, Kamdar Colony, Palace Area [part of DKV Area] – these are the prime, main areas.

ANJA: And in Park Colony [south of DKV] also?

PRAFULLABEN: Park Colony and Patel Colony isolated. But they are. [...] But this area [DKV], they are in majority, Oswal Colony's full of Oswals, all other communities are in minority.

ANJA: And this place behind here is also still Palace Area [south-west of DKV]?

PRAFULLABEN: This is Swastik Society. All this. There are Luhanas, Jains. The top-most, richest Jains, they stay there.

The Jain presence in the old parts of Jamnagar (i.e., on the east and south shores of Lakhota Lake) points to a long-spanning historical presence of Jains in the city (see Banks 1992, 45-46) and in some areas the Jains tend to actually dominate, both numerically¹⁰⁷ as well as in the colloquial understandings of the neighbourhoods and their architectural visibility. The south section of Chandi Bajar is an example of such an area – the sparkling domes of Jain *derasars* dominate this seemingly circular section of the wider Chandi Bajar area with a number of other less visible Jain buildings in their vicinity. The three *derasars*, three *sthanaks*, two *upashrays*, and a *pathshala* hall concentrated in this small area of around one hectare are also supported by a community of Jains residing in the streets surrounding Chandi Bajar, who have established businesses in their vicinity with either names or symbols declaring the business' association with Jainism (e.g. the *Mahavir Bhandani* clothes shop, which also displays a swastika in its logo) or serving solely the religious clientele of the area (e.g., a small shop devoted to selling Jain paraphernalia).

The overwhelming visual and social presence of Jainism in Chandi Bajar was also a consequence of (patrilineal) hereditary patterns, tight-knit social ties, and *jati*-based housing distribution existing throughout Jamnagar, which encouraged Jamnagar Jains as well as most other Jamnagaris to live in the same areas as their relatives or other members of their *jati* (see Banks 1992, 64-65). Likewise, many Jains of Chandi Bajar continued to reside in this area historically associated with Jainism as their houses have been in the family for several generations, the neighbours are either members of their extended family, their *jati* communities, or other social circles, and the proximity of Jain-friendly businesses nearby makes the daily compliance with Jain behavioural rules easier. Although not all Jain families lived as joint families or even continue residing in the areas of their upbringing, the Jains that moved away tended to move to other areas associated with Jains. While in recent decades more Jains have moved out of Chandi Bajar and other areas within the compact old Jamnagar to newer neighbourhoods (such as DKV Area and Patel Colony), settlement patterns following *jati* lines have moved with them and specific areas were still known as being predominantly Jain (or in other instances,

¹⁰⁷ According to one informant the Jains represented 98% of the residents living in the south side of Chandi Bajar and although that might be an over-estimate, the area was nevertheless heavily Jain-dominated.

predominantly Hindu, Muslim, or associated with other specific *jatis*), though the rigid borders between *jati* areas have become more permeable. Thus, for example, Prafullaben happily lived in a Shrimali-dominated DKV Area, although she herself was a member of the Oswal community.

The residential patterns of Jamnagar Jains can also be observed from the location of Jain religious buildings. As visible from the map below, the highest concentration of Jain buildings was also in the area historically most associated with Jains – namely, Chandi Bajar. Other areas, while still having a Jain presence (both materially and socially), did not have such high concentrations of Jain religious buildings hinting at the later establishment of these residential communities and the consequentially later building of *derasars* and *upashrays* in those neighbourhoods.

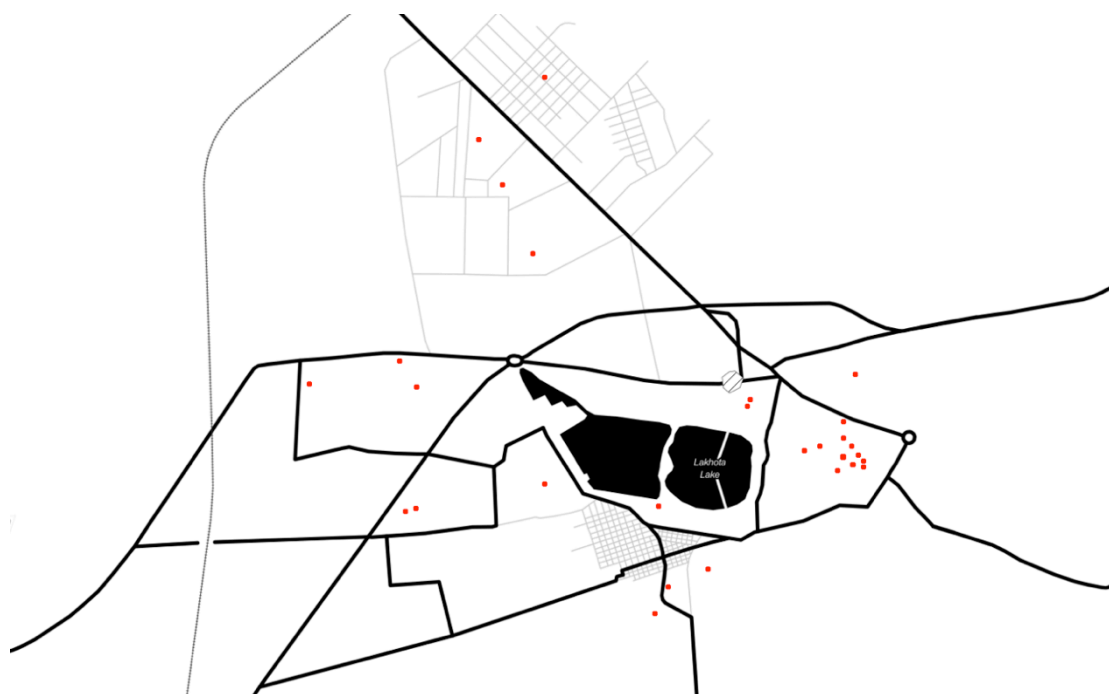


Image 26: Jain religious buildings in Jamnagar (source: Stamen Maps)

Besides the Jain religious buildings marked on the map above (including *derasars*, Derawasi and Sthanakvasi *upashrays*, Digambar *mandirs*, and *gnan* and *guru mandirs*) there were several other buildings in Jamnagar that were associated with Jainism through their ownership by various Jain groups. A Jain *dharamshala* (i.e., a modest hotel for traveling lay Jains), *bhojanshala* (i.e., a discounted canteen

strictly observing Jain dietary rules), a housing scheme for poor Jain families, a primary school for disadvantaged local girls, and a private religious school for Jain children are all buildings associated with various Jain groups from Jamnagar. While these (mostly) secular buildings played a part in uncovering the local landscape of Jain activity, they are not included in the above map as they were typically built on available land further outside the city, where there were no established Jain communities and they typically did not serve the religious needs of the wider community.¹⁰⁸ They were also fewer in numbers (thus not contributing much to a spatial analysis of Jains in Jamnagar) and less pertinent to our understanding of Jainism in Leicester (where there are no such buildings).

The Jains of Jamnagar

At the 2011 census (Jamnagar City Census 2011), there were roughly 600,000 inhabitants living in greater Jamnagar and slightly under 480,000 living in the city itself. The vast majority of Jamnagaris identified as Hindu (77.6%), roughly a fifth as Muslim (19%), 2.5% as Jain, and less than 1% as Christians, Sikhs, and Buddhists each. Based on official statistics there were 15,086 Jains in Jamnagar, though most of my informants put the number of Jains living in Jamnagar closer to 25,000 either due to an inflated self-perception of the size of the Jain community, the disproportional visibility of Jainism in Jamnagar, the mismatched estimate areas,¹⁰⁹ an unexpected growth in the size of the Jain community since the 2011 census, or due to inaccurate self-identification of Jamnagar Jains as Hindus on the census.¹¹⁰ Yet even with the unofficial estimates of my informants, the percentage of Jains living in Jamnagar amounts to no more than 5% – still a rather small proportion of the entire population of the city.

¹⁰⁸ There is also a handful of *derasars* that are not included on the above map due to their location further outside the city, but they served small communities of Jains on the outskirts of Jamnagar.

¹⁰⁹ There is no official data for religious affiliation in the Jamnagar Metropolitan Region, which may have been the area of reference for my informants' estimates.

¹¹⁰ As mentioned in *Chapter 1*, the historical practices of Jains self-identifying as Hindus on censuses (see Dundas 2002, 5-6) continue to have an impact today and the statistics regarding Jainism obtained through censuses are likely an underestimation.

There were four branches of Jainism present in Jamnagar – Derawasi, Sthanakvasi, Digambara (Kanji-swami), and Shrimad Rajchandra. Although there were no official figures on the distribution of followers among the branches, the Derawasi Jains constituted a notable majority of the local Jain population. Prafullaben gave the following estimation of religious distribution.

There are around 26.000 Jains in Jamnagar. [...] Sthanakvasis are comparatively few in number, Derawasis are more. You can take the bifurcation like this, that six hundred to eight hundred – approximately – Digambar Jains of Kanji-maharaj sampraday [sectarian movement], then three, four hundred of Srimad Rajchandra, five to six thousand Sthanakvasis and eighteen, nineteen thousand – approximately – Derawasis. But Derawasis are again divided into Kartar ghacch, Tappa ghacch, and Achal ghacch [monastic lineages] in Jamnagar. And each this ghacch has their own derasars.

Based on Prafullaben's estimates the local Jain population was composed of around 1.5% Srimad Rajchandra followers, 3% Digambar (Kanji-swami) Jains, 23% Sthanakvasis, and 73% Derawasi Jains.

There were two Digambara religious buildings in Jamnagar, both singling out Kanji-swami as their affiliated *guru*, with the larger one located in Digvijay Plot and the smaller one in DKV Area (both constructed in mid-20th century). While most Derawasi *derasars* in Jamnagar were built near larger concentrations of Derawasi Jains, the locations of the two Digambara *mandirs* were selected based on land availability and price, as Digambara Jains were not affiliated with any particular area of Jamnagar. There was also one newly opened Shrimad Rajchandra worship space in Digvijay Plot, which was opened in April 2015 by Rakeshbhai Zaveri, the leader of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur) to which the so-called *gnan mandir* is affiliated. Similarly to Digambar Jains, the visitors of the Shrimad Rajchandra *gnan mandir* also do not reside in any one particular area, but are instead spread out around the city.

The exact proportion of Derawasi and Sthanakvasi Jains in Jamnagar is difficult to gauge. Due to the elaborate design of the *derasar* domes and the considerable fame some of the *derasars* had due to their ornate construction or historical significance, the Derawasi religious buildings were rather easy to spot. The Derawasi community also had a double set of religious buildings – *derasars* as well as

upashrays, while the Sthanakvasis only used *upashrays* – thus making the numerical representation of Derawasis more visible. Nevertheless, I believe Prafullaben's assessment of the ratio between Derawasi and Sthanakvasi Jamnagaris mentioned above as being one close to four-to-one is generally correct. There were over thirty *derasars* in Jamnagar,¹¹¹ while the Sthanakvasis only had around a dozen ascetic shelters (which also functioned as the hubs of their communal religious activity), thus serving a smaller Sthanakvasi community than the more numerous Derawasi buildings. Applying the ratio of four-to-one to the official (15,000) and unofficial (25,000) numbers of Jains in Jamnagar, we can estimate that there were roughly 3,000-5,000 Sthanakvasi Jains living in Jamnagar, while there were somewhere between 12,000-20,000 Derawasis.

Religious Sites in Jamnagar and Leicester

Juxtaposing Jamnagar's thirty-odd *derasars* and almost as many *upashrays* with Leicester's single multi-sectarian Jain Centre does not sound like a viable comparison to make, yet it is a useful one, as it illuminates the ways Jainism was practiced differently in diaspora than in the non-diasporic city of emigrational origin. Not only did the religious sites themselves look different, they were also used differently by local Jains, especially in terms of behavioural patterns and community functions. We turn to the exploration of these differences next with a particular focus on the Jamnagar Derawasi community and their patterns of temple use.

The Role of a Temple

Since the majority of Jain religious buildings were located in predominantly Jain neighbourhoods, many Derawasi Jamnagar Jains lived in close proximity to a *derasar* and were thus able to visit it frequently. While there were occasions, where they might have visited other *derasars* in Jamnagar (such as on *kalyanak*)¹¹²

¹¹¹ Up from seventeen in early 1980s (Banks 1992, 112).

¹¹² *Kalyanak* is an auspicious moment in the life of a *tirthankar* (of which there are five) and is celebrated in *derasars* by decorating the images of the *tirthankar*, taking them outside of the temple in processions, and performing *pujas* on its *murti*.

celebrations of the main *tirthankara* of a particular *derasar*, or *dhaja bhadlis*, anniversaries of a *derasar*'s consecration), most Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar tended to visit and worship at their own local *derasars* typically obeying a rule 'near temples before big temples.' In areas of higher Jain density and with *derasars* nearby, Jains going for a *puja* could typically walk barefoot to the *derasar*, thus wearing only their ritually clean *puja*-clothes.¹¹³ Due to the general proximity of *derasars* to their places of residence, the Jains were able to visit a *derasar* on a more regular basis – some daily, while most at least several times a week – which made the environment of the *derasar* as well as the actions performed within them a part of their routine and not a special event. Since the Leicester Jain Centre was located further away from the Leicester Jains' homes (they are also more dispersed around the city than in Jamnagar), they had to travel greater distances to the temple and hence visited it more rarely (typically up to once or twice a week), making their visit a more special event.

In Jamnagar Jains regularly visited their local temples from childhood onward either as part of a *pathshala* group or with older relatives and were well-versed in the intricacies of ritual performance from young age onwards, as was illustrated by the opening vignette of the nine-year-old Yashvi performing as a ritual specialist for me, a *puja*-novice. And while rituals such as *puja* were often performed on special occasions by Leicester Jains (the religious core of the community performed them more often), they were part of a daily or weekly routine for many Derawasi Jamnagar Jains and simple acts of obeisance such as *darshan* were even more widespread.

The religious building itself also performed different functions in Leicester than worship spaces did in Jamnagar. In Jamnagar the *derasar* was a place of silence, where worshipers practically ignored each other, walked around performing various actions in an established sequence, and focused almost exclusively on quiet worship. The insides of a *derasar* were permeated with darkness, hushed melodies of *stavans*,¹¹⁴ and clattering of religious paraphernalia, while the wider *derasar*

¹¹³ Clothes not worn while eating, drinking, or excreting. Male Jains typically used a *dhoti* (a light unstitched cloth wrapped around the waist and draped over the torso) and women a *sari* or a *salwar kameez* (cotton trousers, a long blouse, and a silky scarf) used exclusively for ritual purposes.

¹¹⁴ *Stavans* can be equated to Jain religious hymns. See Kelting 2001.

grounds¹¹⁵ were similarly devoted exclusively to religious activities. The socialising (even at religious events, where food was served and socialising was expected) took place outside the *derasar* grounds and outside the sacredness and solemnness associated with it. Since Jamnagar Jains mostly resided in clusters and in those predominantly Jain neighbourhoods often lived in streets or buildings full of other fellow-Jains, they could satisfy their need for socialising with other co-religionists outside the temple – either visiting each other’s homes, casually bumping into other members of their religious community on the street, or being part of larger exclusively Jain socialising groups¹¹⁶ and meeting other Jains at their events. This therefore freed up Jain religious spaces in Jamnagar of the socialising function put on the Leicester Jain Centre and enabled them to be places devoted solely to religious activities.

In Leicester the Jain Centre functioned not only as a religious space, but also a social and cultural one. Being one of the very few public spaces (or rather the only one), where it was possible to meet and socialise with other Jains in Leicester, the visitors tended to linger and chat in the outside parts of the temple (either in the outer Derawasi temple, on the landing, or the ground floor) and hold social events on the ground floor of the Jain Centre. A telling example are the weekly ‘Bollyfit’ classes that took place in the downstairs assembly hall on Thursday evenings during my fieldwork in 2016. Attended mostly by middle-aged women (with the courageous exception of a handful of ladies in their seventies), the classes started after the evening *aarti* around 7.30 pm. Many class-goers arrived at the Centre in advance of the class and participated in the first stages of the *aarti* route before heading downstairs for an hour of zumba-style exercise set to Bollywood hits led by a Leicester Jain. Similarly, the Ladies’ Wing of the Leicester Jain Centre (the so-called Bhagini Kendra), also periodically put on one-off events involving cooking, crafts,

¹¹⁵ *Derasars* in Jamnagar were typically stand-alone structures surrounded by a fence encompassing other smaller buildings housing either deities, ritual supplies, offices, libraries, *pathshala* spaces, or *upashrays*, and some open yard-like areas.

¹¹⁶ Jamnagar Jains enjoyed structured opportunities for socializing, such as the ever present (and not specific to Jains) ‘kitty parties’ – household events where women of a particular family or friendship circle gathered at a home, played games, and enjoyed a light meal. Such socializing was also organized along religious lines and there were six geographical subdivisions of the Jain Social Group of Jamnagar (see Banks 1992, 97-99), which had regular gatherings focusing on food, quizzes, and prizes. Jains from all branches of the Jain tradition participated in their events.

and/or quizzes that were organised in the assembly hall and the service area of the ground floor and were attended mostly by middle-aged to older women.

With activities such as the Bollyfit classes and the Bhagini Kendra social events, the Leicester Jain Centre not only utilised the available space and offered financially accessible activities,¹¹⁷ but also enabled socialising opportunities for Leicester Jains to weave stronger ties with their co-religionists and create a sense of community and belonging through non-religious events. Additionally, such events also made the building – and the community – feel more accessible to those not overly interested in religious events¹¹⁸ and attempted to draw them in by focusing on inter-personal relationships and enjoyable activities. The Leicester Jain Centre's focus on socialising was emphasised through the dedicated socialising area attached to the worship space (i.e., the assembly hall beneath the Derawasi temple), which was not a standard practice in non-diasporic contexts like Jamnagar. The intertwining of the religious and socialising functions otherwise separated in the non-diasporic environment of Jamnagar can in the case of Leicester be ascribed primarily to the community's numerical smallness and the lack of other avenues for in-group socialising. As there were no other groups or organisations satisfying those needs, the Leicester Jain Centre thus became the hub of multiple strands of activity – from worship and teaching to cooking and aerobics.

Mono- and Multi-sectarian Worship Spaces

Another feature of the Leicester Jain Centre atypical for non-diasporic worship spaces was the multi-sectarian nature of its space. The Jain Centre in Leicester housed worship spaces of four Jain branches – Derawasi, Sthanakvasi, Digambar, and Srimad Rajchandra – while religious spaces in Jamnagar were mono-sectarian and only intended for followers of a single branch of Jainism.¹¹⁹ Since the multi-sectarian space of the Leicester Jain Centre was already discussed in *Chapter 5*

¹¹⁷ Attending a single Bollyfit class cost £1, which was mostly a symbolic compensation for the instructor, as the venue was provided free of charge.

¹¹⁸ For example, the Bollyfit instructor was not a regular attendee of religious events (though her mother was), yet prepared and led a weekly class for the community.

¹¹⁹ *Derasars* in Jamnagar and elsewhere in India were often further affiliated with particular monastic lineages within a Jain branch, e.g. the Tappa *ghacch* lineage within Derawasi Jainism.

(*Transforming the Everyday*), we will now focus on the mono-sectarian Jain buildings in Jamnagar and look more closely at the ways in which they differ from the multi-sectarian Leicester Jain Centre. The most apparent difference was the temples' architectural appearance; the striking white domes crowned with thin, long, white-and-red flags (*dhajas*) were instantly recognisable as Derawasi. While there was a great variety in the size, complexity, and interior décor of Jamnagar *derasars*, they mostly shared a common design language developed through centuries of temple building.



**Image 27: The domes of Adinath and Shantinath *derasars* in Chandi Bajar
(image by the author)**

As an example of a typical neighbourhood *derasar* – and to give a flavour of the mono-sectarian worship spaces typical of non-diasporic Jain environments – we will examine Palace *derasar*, the site of my birthday *puja* described in the opening vignette. It was a quintessential small to medium-sized Derawasi temple that has

been built in the last century¹²⁰ and featured a simple floor plan reminiscent of bigger, more elaborate *derasars*. Palace *derasar* was tucked away in a quiet alley in the DKV area of north Jamnagar and was used primarily by Jains living in the neighbourhood surrounding it. Despite its local nature, the *derasar* became a hub of activity on Mahavir *kalyanak* celebrations, especially Mahavir *janma-kalyanak* (i.e., the celebration of Mahavir-swami's birth, also called Mahavir *jayanti*), as reportedly several thousand Jamnagar Jains came to perform an act of obeisance to the main *murti* of Palace *derasar*.

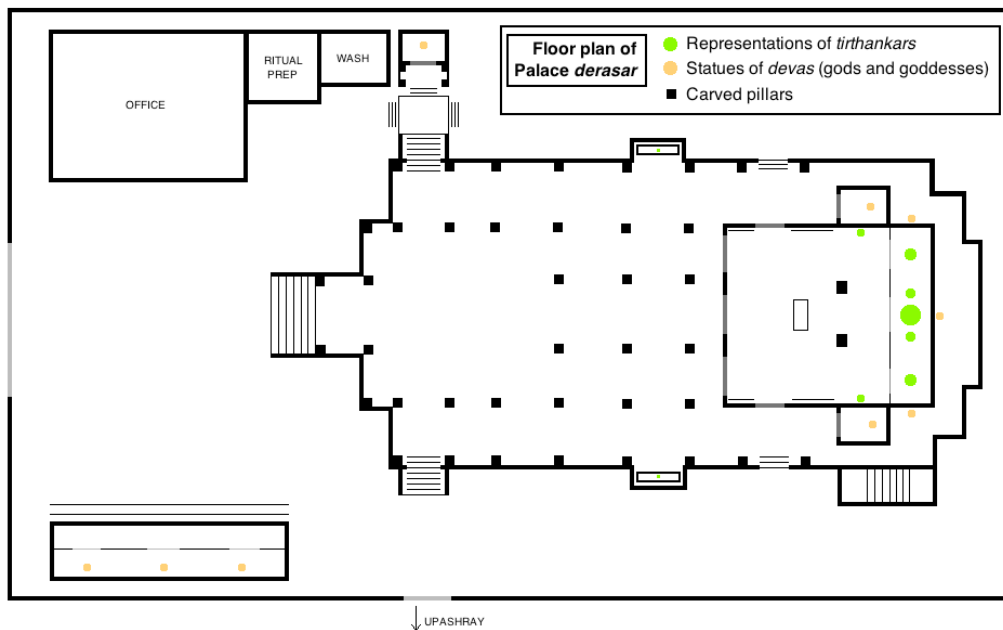


Image 4: Palace *derasar* floor plan (image by the author)¹²¹

Palace *derasar* was a typical white, domed, purpose-built temple with a colourfully decorated inner temple – a space that could accommodate up to fifty people, but was typically filled with around a dozen during busier periods of the day – serving as the entryway to the inner sanctum (*garbha-griha*), where the main *murti* of Mahavir-swami was surrounded by other bigger and smaller *murtis* of other *tirthankars*. The *derasar*'s outer temple resembled a shaded veranda with ornate

¹²⁰ Palace *derasar* has not yet acquired the status of a *tirth* – a pilgrimage site, which a purpose-built *derasar* acquires after celebrating a hundredth anniversary of its consecration.

¹²¹ While there is a smaller worship area on the roof of the *derasar*, it is not used in daily worship and I have thus not included it in this chapter.

white columns forming an orderly pattern leading one towards the inner temple. Sitting on the edge of the platform on each side were two small cupboard-like enclosures housing two more *tirthankar murtis*. In apparent correspondence – though much more prominent – there were two room-like structures attached to the outer walls of the inner temple devoted to important figures of Jainism. The *derasar* itself was surrounded by the ‘*derasar grounds*,’ which housed other smaller administrative and religious buildings. Tucked away in the southeast corner, or directly to the right as one walks in through the main gates, was an elongated structure housing three *murtis* of deities, while on the opposite side lied an office, two rooms devoted to preparation and disposal of ritual utensils, and a small shrine. On the right-hand-side of the *derasar* grounds was an opening leading to the next-door male and female *upashrays*, which could also be accessed from the road.



Image 3: Palace *derasar* (top left: the inner temple; top right: the outer temple; bottom: the *derasar*) (images by the author)

Palace *derasar* was used primarily by the people residing in the neighbourhood, who were able to walk to the *derasar* (though they often used a motorcycle for the sake of convenience) and was a rather small, though perfectly typical Jamnagar *derasar*. There were a handful of bigger *derasars* in the city – namely the Adinath and Shantinath *derasars* in Chandi Bajar and the newly built Mehul Nagar *derasar* in the west part of Jamnagar (Kamdar Colony) – as well as a few small purpose-built *derasars* (such as Sadhna Colony *derasar* or Lal Bungalow *derasar*) and *ghar*, or ‘home’, *derasars*, which are either converted living quarters or *derasars* without domes on their roofs (e.g., Digvijay Plot *ghar derasar* and Kamdar Colony *ghar derasar*). Most of the *derasars* in Jamnagar fell in the mid range between large and small and were similar in size to the Palace *derasar*.

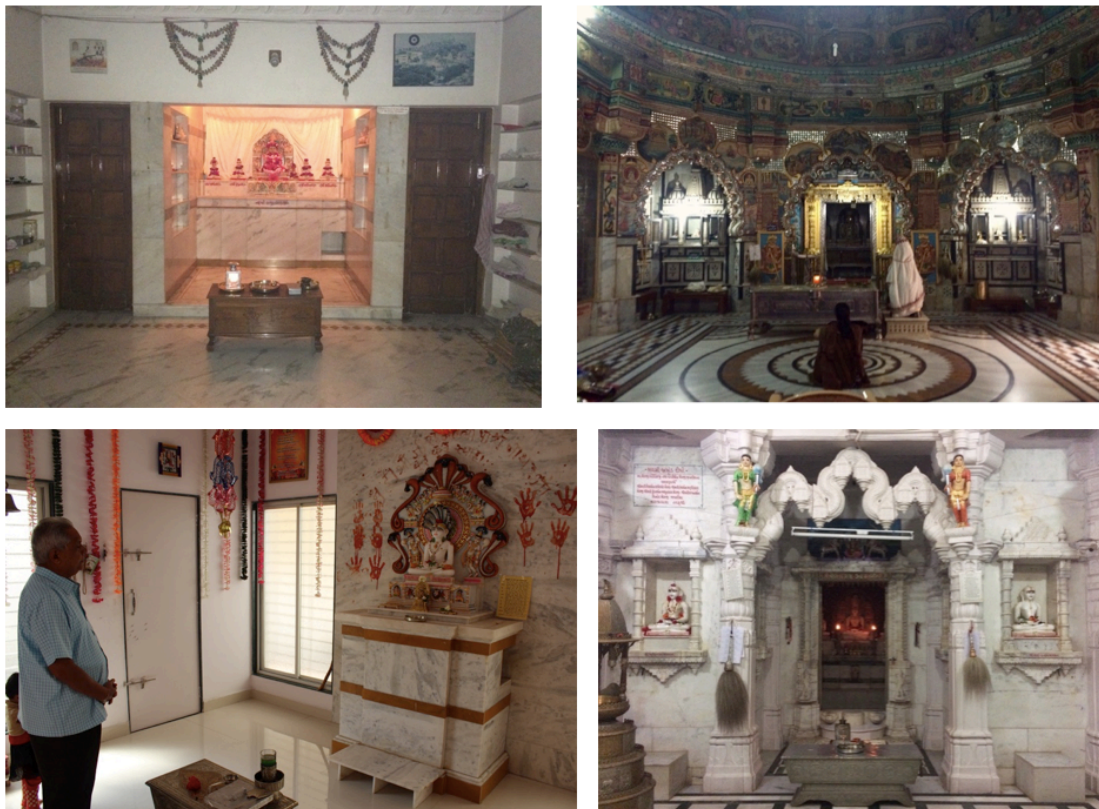


Image 28: Jamnagar *derasars*' interiors (top left: Kamdar Colony *ghar derasar*; top right: Adinath *derasar* in Chandi Bajar; bottom left: Gulab Nagar *derasar*; bottom right: Kamdar Colony *derasar*) (images by the author)

Porous Boundaries

I have already discussed the position of Jamnagar *derasars* in relation to the social and religious functions encapsulated in the Leicester Jain Centre (specifically the separation of those two functions), and I now want to turn to an aspect of *derasar* use that might appear as a unique facet of the Leicester Jain community and their multi-sectarian worship space, yet can be observed in Jamnagar as well – the casual crossing of sectarian lines between Derawasi and Sthanakvasi Jains. The mono-sectarian worship spaces and the physical distances between them might present a picture of impermeable communities based on sectarian affiliation, but did not prevent local Jains from crossing sectarian boundaries and visiting worship spaces of other branches of Jainism. During my fieldwork I met several Sthanakvasi Jains (doctrinally presumed to shun image-worship), who regularly visited *derasars* in Jamnagar and saw such visits as a valuable part of their practice. One of such Sthanakvasi Jains was Dineshbhai, a middle-aged doctor, who visited *derasars* daily.

DINESHBHAI: And just to go temple – the Derawasi – and to go to upashray – the Sthanakvasi – that social taboo is gradually, I'll say, is being closed. My [community] is Sthanakvasi. Okay? But daily is a part of habit. Daily after I finish from here, I go to temple. Okay? Even Digambar.

ANJA: And do many Sthanakvasi people go to derasar?

DINESHBHAI: Yeah. Quite many, quite many. If you see Sthanakvasi go to Derawasi in a liberal this thing. Derawasi they are small rigid.

ANJA: So why is it – for you personally – important that you go to derasar?

DINESHBHAI: Basically, to follow religion and to have good thinking in my head. You need to have some kind of decorated... image. Alright. To change the thinking pattern. Okay. You need to have some... one particular thing in front of us. So without... Just being sitting in a room only you don't have such attraction, I would say, or any in particular kind of thing. So just doing it in upashray – upashray, there are vasai and ma-sati-ji [ascetics] – but the purity, which Lord Mahavir has, is not there with [them]. Okay, if I want to be the best, I need to go to best. Okay. And usually the best are those already who are god and parmatma [supreme soul].

For Dineshbhai images of *tirthankars* were a valuable aid in his worship – something to focus on and prompt one to contemplate the purity of the soul and the path leading to its liberation from rebirth. His daily visits to the *derasar* and the accompanying practice of *darshan* gave him a stronger sense of connection to Jain principles than visiting Sthanakvasi ascetics in *upashrays* and he believed that Jain

religious ideals were better encapsulated in *murtis* of *tirthankars*, than the ascetics, who have not yet transcended their human attributes as *tirthankars* have. He utilized the availability of *derasars* and *murtis* to establish a daily religious practice, one that could be characterized as more convenient, as it could be performed quickly and whenever the *derasar* was open, although it nevertheless displayed his religious commitment.

Dineshbhai did not see his visits to the *derasar* as doctrinally contentious, but simply as an addition used to enhance his Sthanakvasi practice. The visibility of *derasars*, their copiousness, and the number of Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar made it easier for Dineshbhai to see his visits to the *derasar* as acceptable and even desired. During my stay in Jamnagar I met a handful of other Sthanakvasi Jains that also visited *derasars* on a regular basis, but claiming that all or even most Sthanakvasi Jains visited *derasars* would be disproportionate to my findings. Rekhaben – a soft spoken middle-aged woman, who grew up Derawasi, but married into a Sthanakvasi family – explained that Sthanakvasis visiting *derasars* (and occasionally even Derawasi ascetics) was a recent development in local religiosity.

ANJA: Do many Sthanakvasi people go to derasar as well?

REKHABEN: No, not many. Cause who goes, mostly they go there [to upashray]. Only we, young ones. We also, from here also we go both side, like that. Important is religion, not this [sectarianism], but they [elders] are very more particulate than these [young] ones.

Rekhaben agreed with Dineshbhai that visiting *derasars* had become more acceptable for Sthanakvasis in the last few decades. Although she was in her late forties, Rekhaben nevertheless considered herself among the young,¹²² more progressive Sthanakvasis, who were not burdened by sectarian divisions and utilised worship opportunities from both sides of the Shwetambar spectrum. Due to geographical proximity she regularly visited a nearby *derasar*, participated in a *puja mandal*¹²³ at the *derasar*, and often visited the female ascetics in the nearby

¹²² Rekhaben's characterization of herself as a 'young' individual came not so much from her age, but from contrasting herself with the elders in her family (her in-laws) and the wider religious community.

¹²³ *Puja mandals* (similar to *stavan mandals*, see Kelting 2001) are small groups of women, who perform the accompanying music during a *snatra puja* and other ritual events. In addition to music-

Derawasi *upashray*. Nevertheless, Rekhaben did not count herself among the majority and – contrary to Dineshbhai’s views – saw *derasar*-going Sthanakvasis in Jamnagar more as an exception than the rule.

The truth might be somewhere between the two opinions expressed by Dineshbhai and Rekhaben. Based on the data I gathered during my fieldwork I would conclude that the Derawasi-Sthanakvasi relationship in Jamnagar was one of harmonious, but parallel coexistence. Although a number of Sthanakvasis visited *derasars* on a regular basis to pay respect to the images of *tirthankars* and do *darshan*, the majority of the Sthanakvasi community did not and saw it as an inferior and misguided understanding of Sthanakvasi Jainism. Such Sthanakvasis mostly visited *upashrays*, talked to ascetics, listened to their preachings, studied religious texts with them, performed *samayik* or *pratikraman* (either at home or at the *upashray*), and did not engage in image worship. Nevertheless, they were in no way hostile towards Derawasis and apart from disapproving the worship of images and the Derawasi use of fire, flowers, and food in their worship, they did not go out of their way to refute Derawasi teachings and practices. Yet the experiences verbalized by Dineshbhai and Rekhaben nonetheless point to the acceptability of multi-sectarian worship in Jamnagar and the visible presence of Sthanakvasis in Derawasi spaces.

However, the crossing of sectarian boundaries took place mostly unidirectionally. I did not meet any Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar that visited Sthanakvasi *upashrays* or the Digambar *mandir* either regularly or on bigger occasions. Due to their numerical strength and urban visibility, the Derawasi Jains did not feel compelled to venture outside their sectarian lines, further establishing and emphasizing their position as the dominant Jain community in Jamnagar. Similarly to the situation in the Leicester Jain Centre (as discussed in *Chapter 5*), the Derawasi branch of Jainism was better established in Jamnagar than Sthanakvasi and Digambar communities and was able to push these other Jain groupings into the background of their religious practice. Meanwhile, smaller Jain communities needed to engage with the presence of Derawasi Jainism in their vicinity and some individuals decided to incorporate it into their practice as well.

based *mandals*, I also encountered *samayik mandals*, which comprised of women gathered to perform a *samayik* together.



Image 29: Srimad Rajchandra *gnan mandir* in Digvijay Plot (image by the author)

The only instance where Derawasi Jains did nominally cross sectarian boundaries was the Srimad Rajchandra *gnan mandir*. Since the Srimad Rajchandra following was relatively recently established and did not have a strong sectarian identity, it was seen as a neutral territory of religious experimentation and had thus attracted some Derawasi Jains. Nileshbhai, a forty-something businessman, who visited the *derasar* daily on his way to work and was an active member of the Derawasi-led *bhojanshala* (the discounted Jain canteen) was also one of the more committed followers of Srimad Rajchandra and Rakeshbhai Zaveri (of Srimad Rajchandra Mission [Dharampur]). While Nileshbhai existed comfortably in both spheres (Derawasi and Srimad Rajchandra), there were many more, who have either decided to claim the Srimad Rajchandra following as their primary community or have visited the Shrimad Rajchandra events out of curiosity, yet did not claim its religious identification. While the practice of the Srimad Rajchandra group did involve some image-worship like *aarti*, it did not promote more active image-worship like *puja*, thus existing in the grey space between the sectarian divisions and being able to attract both traditionally image-worshipping Derawasi Jains and non-

image-worshipping Sthanakvasis. Due to this in-between-ness and perhaps their newness and smallness, the Shrimad Rajchandra following was not perceived as a doctrinal threat to either of the established Shwetambar branches and was seen mostly as an addition to one's religious practice.

Ascetic Presence and Authority

The traditional four-fold Jain society comprising of lay men, lay women, male ascetics, and female ascetics continued functioning relatively intact in Jamnagar, where the flow of wandering ascetics into the city was relatively steady. During *chaturmas* (the four-month monsoon period, when ascetics stay sedentary) dozens of ascetics (*sadhu* and *sadhvi-jis*) stayed in the city's *upashrays*, gave daily *vyakhyans* (preachings or lectures) in the mornings, and in the evenings led the local Jains in *pratikraman*. All the major Jain neighbourhoods in Jamnagar had at least one Derawasi *upashray* (most Sthanakvasi *upashrays* are concentrated in the Chandi Bajar area) and the Jains residing in the vicinity made regular visits to the *upashray* either for the morning *vyakhyan* or the evening *pratikraman* (especially during Paryushan). During the dryer months of the year (the non-*chaturmas* period) most *upashrays* sheltered at least a few ascetic residents, although they moved from one *upashray* to the next every few days – while some of their moves were within the city they regularly left for other areas of Gujarat and new ascetics filled their places. Through this continual influx and outflow of ascetics, Jamnagar continued to have a consistent ascetic presence, because despite the continued changing of individual ascetics, the ascetics as a source of religious knowledge and authority were never absent from the city.



Image 30: *Upashrays* in Jamnagar

**(top: women gathered for the evening *pratikraman* in Oswal Colony *upashray*;
bottom: an empty *upashray* next to Avas *derasar*) (images by the author)**

Due to the consistent ascetic presence in Jamnagar, the local Jains were able to integrate visits to the *upashray* into their routines and thus lectures, *pratikramans*, or simple chats with ascetics became part of their daily life. The integration of ascetics into daily routines was especially the case during *chaturmas*, when individual ascetics stayed in particular *upashrays* for longer and gave more frequent lectures, therefore making personal attachments to individual *gurus* easier for the lay Jains living nearby. Frequent visits to the *upashray* were also characteristic particularly of women, who had more time in the vicinity of their homes due to the prevalence of traditional gender roles and division of labour in Jain households – while men spent around ten hours outside the home in paid employment, women were expected to take care of the household and the children (Kelting 2009a). Due to their home-making role, Jain women were also expected to be more involved in religious activities and present as a religious role model for the rest of their families (ibid.), thus making their visits to the *upashray* a socially desirable part of their daily lives. Such integration of religious practices into daily routines occurred from childhood onward and Nidhi, a shy eighteen-year-old woman from Jamnagar studying in Ahmedabad, was actively following in the footsteps of her mother, whom I met in the Ranjit Nagar *upashray*.

ANJA: How about your day. Your everyday, like tomorrow for example, what kind of religious things do you do? During the day. That you would say 'I will do this.'

NIDHI: Worshipping god.

ANJA: So how do you do it? Do you do it at home or derasar?

NIDHI: Derasar. So first of all... the puja. Then cheitya-vandan¹²⁴ and all we do and stavans we sing.

ANJA: You go do it every day?

NIDHI: Yes. Sometimes I also say the navkar mantra, but nothing else then. I'm going for aarti in the evening.

ANJA: Also every day?

NIDHI: Yes. Every day.

[...]

ANJA: Where do you get the knowledge from?

NIDHI: From monks and all.

ANJA: You go visit them regularly?

NIDHI: Yes. When they were here, we go regularly. Every day.

¹²⁴ *Cheitya-vandan* (*caitya-vandana*) is a ritual of veneration involving a set of recitations, ritualized actions, and bows performed while facing a *tirthankar murti* (Wiley 2014, 63).

ANJA: Every day? Okay. And do they have vyakhyan?

NIDHI: Yes. It depend upon them. When they want to keep and the... But in choumasu [chaturmas], every day was there.

Nidhi stated that she visited the *derasar* twice a day for a morning *puja* and the evening *aarti* and that she regularly visited resident ascetics as well, particularly during *chaturmas*, when they held daily *vyakhyan*s. Although she was a school-going woman, she nevertheless took the time before and after school to incorporate religious practices into her life. Especially during the more intense religious periods of *chaturmas*, she also integrated visits to the ascetics in her daily routine and made them part of her everyday life. Being so ingrained into the everyday lives of not only Nidhi, but other lay Jains in Jamnagar as well, the ascetics were able to exert more authority over religious matters of the laity and wield influence over people's religious beliefs and practices.

Religious Authority and Orthodoxy

In the Jain tradition, the people who renounce their possessions, their position in society, their relationship with their families, and take ascetic vows of non-violence and non-possession in a *diksha* ceremony becoming ascetics (*sadhus*, *sadhvi-jis*, *munis*) are seen as the embodied examples of religious life. Through their commitment to the extreme and difficult vows of Jain asceticism they are seen as worthy of admiration and through their life-long dedication to learning Jain religious texts, doctrines, and practices they are imbued with the highest religious authority of any living Jains.¹²⁵ Although there are differences in the level of ascetic authority within monastic orders depending on the gender¹²⁶ and seniority of individual ascetics, the ascetics as a group nevertheless represent the highest religious authority

¹²⁵ The absolutely highest authority lies with the liberated souls of *siddhas* and especially *tirthankars*, who taught the religious teachings studied by Jain ascetics.

¹²⁶ Derawasi female ascetics are not allowed to read certain religious texts (only their summaries written by male ascetics) and are generally perceived as less authoritative – e.g., senior female ascetics need to bow to even newly initiated male ascetics. In Digambar Jainism the gender disparities are even wider, as women are not allowed to take ascetic vows at all (since they are socially unable to discard *all* of their possessions, including clothes) and are thus reduced to a position of very devout lay women without any religious authority instilled in them. See Dundas 2002, 58-59, Jaini 1991, Wiley 2001, 144-5.

in the lived Jain tradition. Individual ascetics that the laity comes into contact with are therefore representatives of this larger authoritative body and act as guides into religious doctrine for the uninitiated laity.

The visits to the *upashrays* and to the ascetics residing within them were thus often an occasion for religious learning, not only during the *vyakhyans* given by the ascetics, but also the casual visits that the laity paid to the ascetics. During my pre-fieldwork visit to Jamnagar in July 2015 I spent five days with a Jain female ascetic in the Ranjit Nagar *upashray*, where she gave me lessons on particular elements of Jain doctrine and I was able to observe the daily rhythm of *upashray* life. Since I was studying with a female ascetic in a female *upashray*, it was exclusively women that visited the four ascetics staying there and given that it was pre-*chaturmas* time, it was likely that the lay women were already preparing for daily visits to the *upashray* that would characterise their *chaturmas*. Nevertheless, I saw many women visiting for a quick display of veneration and staying for a lengthier and more relaxed chat with the ascetics.¹²⁷ Through such conversations the ascetics were able to get involved in the daily lives of the women visiting them, as the visitors often sought counsel on various challenges they might have been facing in their day-to-day (e.g., household disputes). By explaining Jain ethics and doctrinally recommended courses of action for more mundane problems of laity the ascetics expanded their role as religious teachers outside the designated *vyakhyan* timings and offered more holistic religious guidance.

Through such casual conversations the ascetics were able to reinforce the lessons taught during more structured learning events (such as *vyakhyans* or *shibirs* – intensive religious classes for adult lay Jains spanning several days) and ensure a more uniform and orthodox interpretation of Jain doctrine among the Jamnagar laity. Since a single and undisputable source of religious knowledge and authoritative interpretation of doctrine was readily available to consult with and ask questions, the transmission of religious knowledge and doctrine was more stable in Jamnagar than in Leicester. With a few exceptions, all my interviewees provided me with orthodox explanations of individual doctrines I inquired about in my interviews (such as

¹²⁷ Admittedly, a pale-skinned European woman studying Jainism in this small town (i.e., me) might have been an additional attraction and reason to linger and engage in conversation with the ascetics.

rebirth, karma, soul, dietary restrictions, etc.) and in general appeared more knowledgeable than my interviewees in Leicester. The presence of ascetics thus worked to ensure a higher level of orthodoxy among the Jamnagar Jain laity.

In the diasporic environment, where Jain ascetics are absent and very difficult to reach,¹²⁸ the interpretation of doctrine varied significantly, chiefly when it came to complex elements of Jain doctrine. As already explored in previous chapters, the Leicester Jains (and especially the youth) saw religious authority as being invested primarily in themselves and many were content with inquiring about a doctrinal question with older members of the community and online before thinking through the gathered information and making up their minds for themselves. The lack of uniform authority on doctrinal issues in Leicester thus exposed the dependence of Jain orthodoxy on ascetic presence and the variability of doctrinal interpretations when Jain ascetics are unavailable.

The Doctrine–Ritual Dichotomy

I want to further speculate that in the case of Derawasi Jains¹²⁹ the presence of ascetics did not add only the element of orthodoxy to the local religiosity, but also an aspect of bifurcation of the religious tradition, where doctrine was seen primarily as the domain of ascetics and rituals the sphere of laity. Through observations and interactions I had with Derawasi Jains during my fieldwork in Jamnagar I noticed a distinct interpretation of doctrine–ritual dichotomy (that was largely due to the Derawasis’ extensive ritual arsenal) where doctrine was seen as a more advanced part of religion and was primarily associated with ascetics, while the everyday lay expression of religiosity lay primarily in the performance of image-centred rituals.

Most Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar engaged in rituals focused on an image of a *tirthankar* (either through *darshan* or a variety of *pujas*) at least a few times a week and the eightfold *puja* – the ritual involving touching a *tirthankar murti* and offering it various substances – was seen as the most advantageous ritual as it enabled direct

¹²⁸ A few Leicester Jains stayed in touch with ascetics through their friends and family in India, but most had no stable connection with them.

¹²⁹ Since, for example, Sthanakvasi Jains do not perform image-worshipping rituals, there are fewer rituals available for Sthanakvasis in general and a contrast between doctrine and rituals is more difficult to detect.

contact with the representation of the divine, namely the liberated soul of a *tirthankar*. Rituals involving such direct contact with the sacred images necessitate ritual purity and since Jain ascetics do not bathe and own a very limited amount of clothing, they are prohibited from performing such rituals. Instead, they spend most of their time in *upashrays*, where they devote their time to studying and memorising religious texts.

The laity engaged in such study only occasionally and when they did, they performed it under the guidance of an ascetic, who was typically their *guru*. For studying various Jain religious texts lay Jains needed to seek an explicit permission from their *guru* or a senior ascetic and, in addition to studying under their tutelage, lay Jains also engaged with a text that has been translated by an ascetic. As most of the texts are written in Sanskrit or Prakrit, ancient languages which few contemporary Jains master, lay Jains typically studied religious texts translated into their own mother tongue (in our case Gujarati) done by an ascetic familiar with the ancient language. Ascetics thus acted as guardians of Jain doctrine and its correct interpretation on multiple levels, guiding individual lay Jains towards its appropriate understanding each step of the way – allowing them to study it, supplying them with their own translation, and supporting them in their understanding of the text. Furthermore, such study was often done through the performance of a *samayik*, a ritualised form of asceticism in which a lay Jain adopts temporary ascetic vows for a period of forty-eight minutes and is usually devoted to religious study, recitation of *mantras*, or singing of *stavans*. Thus it is through a temporary embodiment as an ascetic that the laity typically approaches Jain doctrine.

The fact that ascetics do not perform rituals at *derasars*,¹³⁰ which represent a major part of religious practice for laity, and that ascetics guide lay Jains in their study of doctrine in their *vyakhyans* further supports my argument that doctrine was associated primarily with ascetics, while the laity was seen to express their religiosity through ritual. While I believe such bifurcation was operational among Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar, the clear-cut dichotomy between doctrine and ritual is somewhat ideal-typical. Although ascetics indeed devoted much more time to religious study than lay Jains and did not perform many of the image-focused rituals central to laity,

¹³⁰ Except *darshan*, which does not require ritual purity.

they conducted their life to the rhythm of other rituals – morning and evening *pratikramans*, regular ritualised inspections of their clothing for small insects (*pratilekhana*), periodic veneration of senior ascetics in their immediate vicinity, and so on. The number and length of these rituals performed by ascetics on a daily basis was much greater than that of lay Jains and many more mundane activities conducted by Jain ascetics were also shaped by strict rules – such as collecting and consuming food, cleaning their lodgings, and even excreting. Furthermore, the ascetics existed in a permanent state of *samayik*. Having taken a vow of lifelong *samayik* during their *diksha* ceremony, their life in essence became a ritual. The ascetic life is governed by ritual activity and behavioural rules so much so that it becomes completely saturated with bodily expression of religion, thus elevating it to a higher level of reverence and religious knowledge. So while religious doctrine was indeed more closely associated with ascetics, that association did not exist in the absence of its presumed opposite – the ritual – but as its continuation and enhancement.

I would argue that the roots of this understanding of the doctrine–ritual dichotomy can be traced to a general approach to learning about Jainism in Jamnagar, which was firstly through ritual; children learnt the rituals before understanding their meaning and adults performed them despite sometimes not knowing it. Religious classes for children (i.e., *pathshala*) in Jamnagar reflected that, as they consisted mostly of memorisation of ritual texts (as discussed in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*), therefore introducing children to Jainism through *doing*. Moreover, children were often taken to *derasars* and shown the performance of various rituals from a young age, so it was through ritual that they get to know Jainism before they heard and understood the various stories demonstrating Jain values. Additionally, it was not until their teens that children were versed enough in theological language that they could fully understand the *vyakhyans* given by ascetics and start absorbing the Jain doctrine communicated in them. Thus the movement from ritual towards doctrine was seen as a natural progression towards in-depth Jain knowledge and while ritual was accessible to even those without a comprehensive understanding of Jainism, it was only the more ‘religiously advanced’ individuals that possessed the access to doctrine as well.

Such understanding of the doctrine–ritual dichotomy was not paralleled by the Jains in Leicester, where there were no ascetics to claim command over doctrine and contrast their doctrinal knowledge with ritual practice of the laity. The ideal-typical doctrine–ritual dichotomy was instead substituted by a heightened rationalisation of religion, where doctrine had become everybody’s domain and was more freely interpreted by individuals. As a result, Leicester Jains developed a number of individual doctrinal interpretations, while rituals were performed less frequently and with a more pronounced need to understand their specific meaning (as discussed in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*). The divergences between the Jamnagar and Leicester Derawasi communities in relation to the doctrine–ritual dichotomy suggest that the associations of doctrine with ascetics and rituals with laity is context-specific, not stable across Derawasi communities, and can be influenced by the changes in the social environment of the community or disturbed through the process of migration.

While we will explore these societal factors in detail in the next chapter (*Chapter 7: Diasporic Reverberations*), I first want to examine a particular Jain community in Jamnagar, which shares a number of similarities with the Leicester Jain community, in order to explore what their similarities and differences can tell us about the diasporic religious experience.

Influences of the Wider Social Context

As an illustrative example of the influence of social environment on religious practice I want to explore the local Digambar community in Jamnagar and the elements of similarity and difference they have with the Jain community in Leicester. While both communities existed in very different contexts, they shared a number of similarities that originated mainly from their small numerical power – both the Leicester and the Digambar Jamnagar communities were not big enough to actively support more than one major centre of activity and both had similar patterns of community organising. Yet there were some fundamental differences to the social surroundings in which the two groups existed and exploring them can give us a better understanding of the social influences affecting religious practice either in a diasporic or non-diasporic environment. In this section of the chapter we will first go

over the *parallels* between the two communities in order to better understand the local Digambar community and how they relate to the Leicester Jains, and then examine the various *divergences* that will highlight some of the wider influences that shape the two communities.

Parallels between Digambar Jamnagaris and Leicester Jains

Both the Digambar community in Jamnagar and the Leicester Jain community were minorities in the religious landscapes of their cities. At the beginning of the chapter Prafullaben estimated that there were somewhere between 600-800 Digambara Jains in Jamnagar and Rameshbhai, a religious elder in the Jamnagar Digambar community, confirmed her estimates by saying: “*We are about six hundred people totally. Hundred and seventy families.*” On the other hand, the Leicester Jain community can be estimated to around 1,500 members in a city of 330,000, which is a similarly small percentage of representation as the seven hundred Digambar Jains living among roughly 600,000 Jamnagaris.

While the Digambar community had two religious spaces in Jamnagar – a small *mandir* near Palace *derasar* in DKV area and a bigger religious centre in Digvijay Plot – the main place of religious activity was the *mandir* in Digvijay Plot (used for weekly communal *dravya pujas*, *pathshala*, and bigger religious processions), while the smaller *mandir* was used mostly by the Digambar Jains living nearby for daily visits and individual rituals. The Leicester Jain community also had a spatial focal point in the shape of the Leicester Jain Centre, which connected individuals and provided space for religious and social activities (as discussed in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*). Therefore both the Digambar Jains in Jamnagar and the Leicester Jains had a single religious centre, which worked as the focal point of their religious life. Both temples were also of rather recent construction. The building of the Leicester Jain Centre was bought in 1978 and opened as a fully consecrated temple in 1988, while the main Digambar *mandir* in Jamnagar was opened as a newly-built building in the early 1960s, as Rameshbhai touched upon during one of our interviews: “*This temple, the foundation stone was laid by Kanji-swami. [...] [In 2016] the temple is fifty-five years old.*” While the Digambar *mandir* in Jamnagar was built more than two decades before the Jain Centre in Leicester (thus having a

slightly longer history), it was still rather new compared to the *derasars* surrounding it (some are more than four hundred years old) and thus occupied a similar position as the Leicester Jain Centre in the local religious landscape.



Image 31: Digambar *mandir* (top: exterior; bottom: interior)
(images by the author)

Like the Leicester Jain community, the Digambar Jains in Jamnagar existed on the outskirts of their hegemonic religious centre,¹³¹ which in their case finds its focus in learning centres of Kanji-swami doctrine and the cities in which they are situated (such as Songadh and Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Jaipur in Rajasthan, and Mumbai in Maharashtra). Rameshbhai alluded to the problem of being “far” from those centres when discussing the religious leadership in the Digambar community in Jamnagar.

The pandits also come here, we invite pandits. Three, four times in a year. Different puja. So we ask, you know, people from outside to come here and they perform the puja and all that. [...] The pandit, which you saw, he came from Ahmedabad. Okay? And he's a permanent pandit of one particular centre. He's permanent pandit there. We are also looking for a permanent pandit here. Because Jamnagar is far in the corner, where it's difficult to attract, you know. We have taken full responsibility that we will be very generous, if somebody decided to come here. So we have the flat available. Our own flat. Which is very comfortable. Sometimes during the Paryushana, Das Lakshana, pandit comes from outside. [...] So this flat is for them. And everything is there. All the utensils are there, everything is available. So we are ready, if somebody's ready to come and settle in Jamnagar.

Similarly to the situation the Leicester Jain Centre faced before recruiting religious leaders like Jayeshbhai (and the supporting position of *pujari*), the Digambar community in Jamnagar had to continuously invite religious leaders – or *pandits* as Rameshbhai and the rest of the local Digambar community referred to them – to come and preach either at bigger occasions such as Das Lakshan¹³² or for other smaller events. While visiting *pandits* provided the community with specialised religious content and sporadic ritual leadership, having a permanent *pandit* would provide them with the consistent religious leadership and knowledge development, which was lacking in the community.

The short history of the local Digambar community also played a part in their shortage of permanent religious leadership, as Rameshbhai explained, when talking about the time before the main Digambar *mandir* was established in Jamnagar.

¹³¹ As touched upon in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*, the Leicester Jain community lies on the margins of the hegemonic Jainism centred in the broader context of India (especially states with bigger proportion of Jains).

¹³² Das Lakshan is the Digambar equivalent to the Shwetambar Paryushan. It occurs a few days later than Paryushan, lasts for ten days, and each day is dedicated to the examination of a particular virtue.

There were all Shwetambar mandirs. Only Shwetambar mandirs were there. We used to go there, we used to go to temple. My father is a very, very staunch follower of [Kanji-swami]. He has been disciple of guru-dev, I think, since he was twenty. So seventy plus years he's a follower. And one by one everybody came together. Earlier there were about five or six families in Jamnagar. They were very, very strong followers of guru-dev. At that time there was no temple, but they were followers, which was... You know, they hear from word of mouth and, you know, then they go, things like that.

Thus the lack of *pandits* as well as the difficult access to religious knowledge was also due to the fact that the Jamnagar Digambar community was rather newly established. According to Rameshbhai, the first followers of Kanji-swami appeared in Jamnagar (mostly through conversion) sometime in the 1930s and 1940s before their numbers swelled and enabled them to form a community and raise money for the construction of a religious building throughout the 1950s and early 1960s (see Banks 1992, 109-110).

In addition to the Jamnagar's Digambar community not having a permanent *pandit*, they also did not have ready access to Digambar ascetics (of either Kanji-swami or other Digambar lineage). The vast majority of ascetics in Jamnagar were Derawasi, with a minor section of them being Sthanakvasi as well, but I have not observed any Digambar ascetics during my fieldwork or heard of Digambar *munis* visiting the city at all.¹³³ That is rather similar to the situation of the Leicester Jain community, where there were no wandering ascetics visiting the city¹³⁴ and most Leicester Jains contacted ascetics only while visiting India or via phone and email through their friends and relatives living in cities with regular influx of Jain ascetics. Thus neither of the two communities had regular access to the bearers of the highest religious authority and had a similar need for permanent lay religious leadership, which had been met in Leicester through Jayeshbhai and others before him, but still needed meeting in the Jamnagar Digambar community.

¹³³ I was made aware of a Digambar women living in the DKV area, who had taken partial ascetic vows (as Digambar women cannot take full vows of initiation), but she did not perform any of the knowledge transmission and ethical guidance functions that are usually performed by wandering ascetics, and had instead lived a minimalist and reclusive life in an ordinary apartment.

¹³⁴ Though there are yearly (or less frequent) visits to the Leicester Jain Centre by the Terapanthi *samnijs* (partially initiated female ascetics) from London, they are not seen as equally legitimate sources of religious guidance as the Derawasi and Sthanakvasi ascetics and thus their visits play only a minor role in the local context of religious authority.

Both communities also shared a similar structure of the children's religious education they provided. In Leicester as well as among Jamnagar Digambars *pathshala* was held once a week, on Sundays, and both communities focused their religious instruction of children on more conceptual content (such as stories and doctrinal teachings), while focusing less on ritual instruction and textual memorisation (typical of Derawasi *pathshalas* in Jamnagar). The reason behind a weekly *pathshala* (as opposed to the daily Derawasi *pathshala* widespread in Jamnagar) in both communities was the distance between their single religious centres and the residences of their followers. While most Derawasi Jains in Jamnagar lived within walking distance of a *derasar* or *upashray*, where daily *pathshala* was held, and could thus send their children to religious instruction without much difficulty, that was not the case for either of the communities at hand. No Digambars lived near the Digambar *mandir* in Digvijay Plot, while there were also very few Jains living near the Leicester Jain Centre. Thus, in order to guarantee the largest possible attendance, their *pathshalas* had been moved to the weekend and condensed into a single class per week.

A parallel reason (in both communities) for the *pathshala*'s timing were also the major communal events that were typically held on Sundays. In Leicester all major celebrations were held on Sundays and there were monthly *satsangs* (communal gatherings) held on Sundays during which ritual activities (such as *snatra pujas* and *samayiks*) were performed. Similarly, the Digambar community in Jamnagar gathered every Sunday to perform a *dravya puja* – the worship of *tirthankaras* and their *murtis* through positioning of various substances on a metal plate with the accompaniment of ritual verses – while during the week, most Digambars performed fewer or smaller rituals, as Rameshbhai explained.

RAMESHBHAI: I – every day – compulsorily I go to temple. Small prayer. This every day. Throughout the year. And all the religious function, invariably I'm here.

ANJA: So when you say you go for a small prayer, is that just darshan or...?

RAMESHBHAI: Darshan. Darshan and the, you know, small prayer. Navkar mantra and twenty-four... just name and like that. [Some] people are doing puja – all the, you know, white rice,... All eight they do. Not the full puja, only the agra.

In both communities then, there was a single designated day in the week for the gathering of the community, which happened on the only day Indian workers were off work – Sunday.

The divergences between the two communities

Despite the numerous similarities between the Digambar Jains in Jamnagar and the Leicester Jain community explored above, there are a number of differences between the two communities that point not only to their individual divergences, but also to the differences between the wider social contexts in which they exist. By examining the divergences between the two communities, I hope to show some of the social elements shaping the religious expressions of the Leicester and Jamnagar communities and point to the ways in which a diasporic environment can affect a religious community.

As mentioned above, the Digambar community of Jamnagar was united by a single interpretation of the Jain tradition, namely the teachings of Kanji-swami.¹³⁵ Rameshbhai already highlighted the fact that the movement of Digambar Jains following this influential ascetic was formed in the mid-20th century under the leadership of the charismatic monk, who converted from Sthanakvasi Jainism to a more mystical interpretation of Digambar Jainism (see Dundas 2002, 265-271). Being members of a particular sub-branch of Jainism afforded the Digambar community of Jamnagar a degree of religious unity that was unachievable in the Leicester Jain community, where four branches of Jainism coexisted under a single roof. The doctrinal unity manifested itself through various avenues – for example, the children’s religious education in the Digambar *mandir* did not have to thread the doctrinal lines between different sectarian interpretations, their communal rituals did not have to balance different traditions of practice, and the members were able to build a community consciousness reliant on a single and clear religious identity. The Leicester Jains, on the other hand, were divided between Digambars, image-

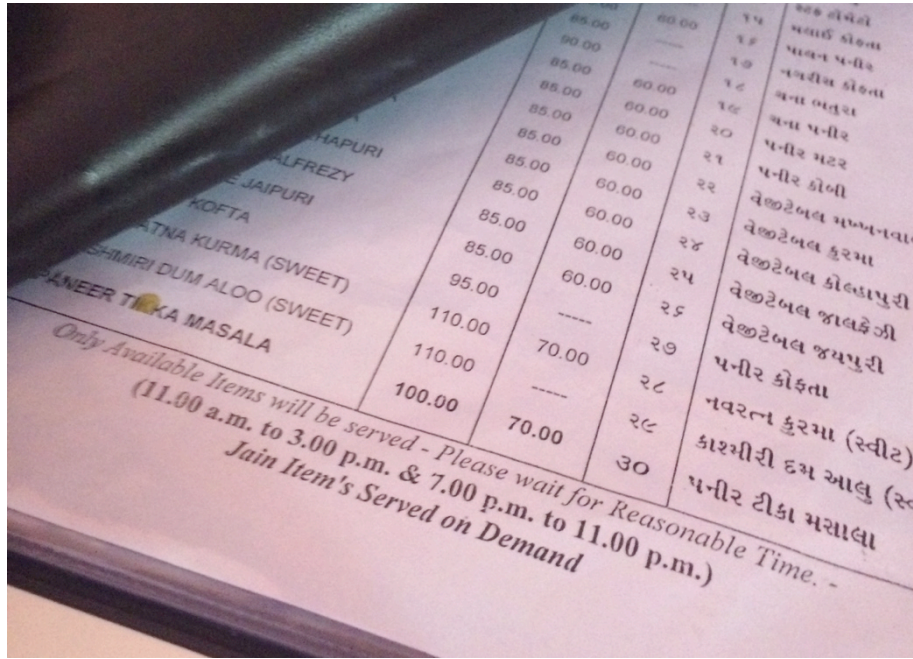
¹³⁵ Despite following a particular interpretation of Digambar doctrine heavily reliant on a single figure, the Jamnagar community under question referred to itself simply as ‘Digambar Jains’ and not ‘Kanji-swami Jains’ or ‘Digambar Kanji-swami Jains’ – they referred to Kanji-swami simply as a *guru* and did not single him out in other ways – and therefore I have adopted this terminology as well.

worshipping Derawasis, image-rejecting Sthanakvasis, and introspection-focused Shrimad Rajchandra Jains, who relied on a more general sphere of pan-Jain religious identity and fundamental unifying beliefs to form a cohesive community.

In addition to being a conglomerate of different Jain traditions, the Leicester Jain community was surrounded by non-Jain and markedly different religious communities, while the Digambar community was able to draw on numerous pockets of Jainism sprinkled around the city (otherwise majority Hindu). The Digambar Jains were part of a larger religious entity of Jamnagar Jains, who were known in the social context of Jamnagar (and Gujarat more broadly) as a recognisable religious group with particular connotations associated with them. Having other groupings of co-religionists nearby also enabled the Jamnagar Digambar Jains to reach out to other Jain individuals and groups for either religious or socialising reasons. They were connected with other Jamnagar Jains through friendships, social groups,¹³⁶ and business ties outside their immediate community of worship. Due to their numerical weakness, the Digambar Jains often participated in events and groups falling under the general 'Jain' umbrella and were thus able to interact with numerous other co-religionists. That was not the case in Leicester, where socialization with other fellow-Jains was limited to a handful of contexts, chief of which were the Leicester Jain Centre and the homes of those visiting the Centre as their primary worship space.

For Digambar Jains of Jamnagar being part of a larger religious entity afforded not only a wider social network and a broader sense of belonging, but also a greater recognisability in the wider Jamnagar society and a better chance of their daily practices and needs being accommodated. Because the broader group of Jains was numerically substantial and financially influential enough, their practices were relatively well known among the local population and often accommodated. A telling example is the ease with which Jain food was available in Jamnagar. In addition to the *bhojanshala* (a discounted canteen following Jain dietary regulations), which served exclusively Jain food (complying with all religious dietary regulations, even day- and season-specific ones), there were numerous restaurants accommodating Jain dietary requirements either on demand or offering them on their menus already.

¹³⁶ Digambar Jains also participated in the Jain Social Group of Jamnagar, which had regular and well-attended gatherings and included Jains from all branches of the tradition.



**Image 32: Photo of a restaurant menu (“Jain Item’s Served on Demand”)
(image by author)**

The image above was taken in a small restaurant, which overlooked a busy street on the edge of the city centre, housed less than a dozen tables, and had me as the only patron on that particular early afternoon, but nevertheless clearly signalled its willingness to prepare their dishes in accordance with Jain dietary needs at the bottom of their menu. While not marking particular dishes as suitable for Jains, they nevertheless enabled their Jain guests to browse freely through the menu safe in the knowledge that their dietary restrictions will be respected in the making of their chosen dish (see Cort 2001, 132).¹³⁷ Such ease and security was not afforded to Jains living in Leicester (or elsewhere in the UK), as Jain dietary norms were not well known and rarely accommodated. Instead, Leicester Jains have identified a handful of restaurants willing to prepare their dishes without root vegetables and became their regular customers or have simply stopped following the dietary rules pertaining to the items of food such as root vegetables or eggs (discussed in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*). Additionally, the Leicester Jains faced another problem

¹³⁷ Following Jain dietary rules is made additionally easy in Jamnagar by the fact that the city is situated in Gujarat, a largely vegetarian state, making the restaurant menus largely meat-free.

not often encountered by the Digambars living in Jamnagar and that is the continual necessity for explanations from the non-Jain population of Leicester. Leicester Jains had to explain not only their dietary habits, but also their religious beliefs and practices more broadly. Due to the general unfamiliarity of Leicester residents with Jainism, the Leicester Jains had to function as ambassadors of their religious tradition to the broader society and continually explain their actions and beliefs to the rest of Leicester residents.

Yet on the other hand, the wider familiarity with Jainism and the expectation of Jain behaviour in Jamnagar put not only Digambar Jains, but all Jains living in Jamnagar in a situation where ideal-typical Jain behaviour was expected of them. Such informal social surveillance happened most intensely within Jain communities and when in contact with other Jains, but was also continuously present when individual Jamnagar Jains were surrounded by other Jamnagaris familiar with Jain behavioural norms. The imperative of vegetarianism and abstaining from other proscribed foods therefore became not an individual expression of religious doctrine through practice, but a required expression of social and religious identity. Dietary compliance, abstaining from alcohol, or other expressions of religious belonging (such as a golden *tilak* on one's forehead representing active religious practice) were expected from Jamnagar Jains and negative consequences in the form of (non-)verbal remarks, loss of status, or social isolation could be inflicted either from other Jains or, more importantly, from non-Jain individuals, who come into contact with a non-conforming Jain either via business or social interactions. In Leicester such informal social control in relation to one's compliance with religious norms was much lighter even within the Leicester Jain community and practically non-existent among the non-Jain population of Leicester. Instead, the Leicester Jains were subjected to the religious and social norms of 'Englishness' and potentially seen as deviating from these established norms, when complying with the specific norms of Jainism (e.g. not eating root vegetables), a subject to which we turn in the next chapter.

Conclusion: Echoes and Reverberations

In this chapter we transported the discussion of religious change in diaspora into a non-diasporic environment of Jamnagar and listened for the echoes to some of the claims put forth in the preceding chapters focusing exclusively on the Leicester Jain community. Through a conversation between the two contexts we explored the position of religious spaces in Leicester and Jamnagar, looked into the role ascetics played in Jamnagar both in relation to lay orthodoxy as well as the ostensible separation of doctrine from ritual, and considered the possibility of comparing a non-diasporic Digambar community with the Leicester Jains in pursuit of social elements shaping the religious expressions in both cities.

By contrasting the features of Jainism as it was practiced in Jamnagar and Leicester the examination teased out some influences of the social, cultural, and religious contexts that impacted religious practice within the communities under examination. We now turn to a deeper exploration of these elements by focusing again on the Leicester Jain community and the English social environment in which they exist. To follow the metaphor proposed in the chapter's title a step further: after hearing the Indian echoes to the individual examples of diasporic religious change explored in this thesis, we will now listen to the reverberations of those echoes in the primary case study itself. How has our detour into a non-diasporic environment helped us better understand the socio-cultural influences shaping the expression and practice of Jainism in Leicester? What internal and external influences have impacted the Leicester Jain community and engendered religious change? What makes Leicester Jainism distinctly diasporic? And what local flavours can we pick up on, when savouring the case study of religious change in the Leicester Jain community?

Diasporic Reverberations

*Vignette: A Recipe for 'Macaroni Indian Style'*¹³⁸

Ingredients:

90 grams of boiled macaroni
2 boiled tomatoes
4-5 green chillies
8-10 curry leaves
2-3 teaspoons of butter
1 capsicum
pinch of turmeric powder
2 teaspoons of red chilli powder
7-8 basil leaves
1 teaspoon of oregano, salt, and sugar each
½ cup of fresh cream
4-5 sliced olives

Method:

1. In a grinder add the boiled tomatoes, green chillies and curry leaves. Grind to make a paste.
2. In a pan take some butter. Add juliennes of capsicum and cook till it softens.
3. Add the previously made paste and stir well.
4. Add turmeric powder, red chilli powder, and chopped basil leaves.
5. Add oregano, salt, and sugar.
6. Mix well and add ½ cup of fresh cream.
7. Now add the olives and mix them well.
8. Add the boiled pasta and cook it for a while.
9. Macaroni Indian Style is ready.

* * *

¹³⁸ Adopted from the Gujarat Rasoi YouTube channel. Macaroni Pasta | Recipes In Gujarati [Gujarati Language] | Gujarati Rasoi. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkrDGY5EFng> (last accessed 4th April 2018).

The curry leaves mixing among basil leaves; the chillies sharing the same pan as olives; turmeric and red chilli powders thrown in alongside fragments of dried oregano – the mixing of Indian and European (or more specifically Mediterranean) culinary cultures, with a bit of added sugar to make it distinctly Gujarati. Ingredients placed in a pan, fused together by heat, and merging into a particularly multicultural example of daily sustenance. The above ‘Macaroni Indian style’ is an apt metaphor for the Leicester Jain community and the wider influences it has encountered in its diasporic existence – fusing internal characteristics and external forces to produce a distinctly diasporic version of Jainism.

Having explored various examples of religious change in-depth in the previous chapters, this chapter adopts a bird’s-eye view of the topic and offers a more conceptual analysis of the reasons behind the individual examples of change examined throughout the thesis. It draws together the interrogation of religious change conducted in the thesis so far by transitioning from the question of *how* Leicester Jainism has changed to the question of *why* it has changed (and *why* in these particular ways). By taking a step back and reflecting on the broader picture of religious change, it functions as a conclusion to our comprehensive examination of religious change in the Leicester Jain community and uses examples already discussed to not only summarise the ways Jainism is changing in Leicester, but primarily push into new analytical territories. It is guided by questions such as: Why did Jain practices in Leicester change? Under what influences? What adds to the Leicester Jainism’s recognisably English strokes? And what makes it a particularly diasporic Jainism? Drawing on the examples discussed in previous chapters of this thesis and adding new depth of its own, the chapter aims to explore the complexly intertwined nature of diasporic responses to social influences and paint the diasporic experience as a place of possibility and creativity.

The hypotheses and conclusions presented on the following pages are not limited to the Leicester Jains, but instead aim to contribute to the wider discussion on religious practice and change in diasporic communities. The analysis of this particular case study has implications for other case studies as well, as it takes the Jain-specific examples of religious change only as its starting point and seeks to develop more widely applicable tools that would find their utility in other contexts.

In this way the chapter contributes to the field of Diaspora Studies by building on the ethnographic data of Leicester Jainism, analysing individual aspects of religious change in this particular community, and proposing a model for analysing societal influences engendering religious change in other diasporic communities.

The discussion is roughly divided into two parts. The first half of the chapter deals mostly with the *internal characteristics* of the Leicester Jain community and what elements of religious change can be ascribed to endogenous features of the community, before the second half dives into *exogenous influences* engendering religious change such as the physical and social realities of the Leicester Jains' Midlands location and the broader trends and shifts that permeate the society in which they live. Each half of the chapter looks at the individual influences affecting the Leicester Jain community and the religious changes sparked as responses to those influences, before I conclude the discussion by proposing a model of societal influences on diasporic religious practice that ties together the features and forces explored earlier.

Yet a word of caution is in place. Although the discussion in this chapter is based on the ethnographic data analysed in chapters that came before it, it is nevertheless a more theoretical endeavour. When exploring a micro-system such as a diasporic religious community, the inductive postulations on their macro-level influences can be tenuous. It is easier to detect social forces that are most visibly exhibiting their influence on the community (through their presence or their absence) and thus it is also much more difficult to paint an exhaustive picture of all the ways the English society is influencing the religious expression of Leicester Jains. One is bound to list only a limited number of exogenous forces shaping Leicester Jainism and leave some out. It is also much more difficult to present clear evidence in support of these macro-level inductions: the nature of the gathered data is by default focused on micro-level conversations, actions, and observations, and does not necessarily serve well when employed for a broader conceptual discussion. Nevertheless, the assortment of internal and external influences listed on the following pages offers a valuable exploration of broader reasons for religious change in Leicester Jainism and presents the contours that the interaction between a society and a diasporic religious tradition leaves behind.

Endogenous Features

In this section of the chapter we will focus exclusively on the Leicester Jain community and the elements of change within it that have come about due to the fact that the community was formed as a consequence of migration. By looking – in turn – at the demographic characteristics of the community, the specificities surrounding their religious infrastructure, and more specifically the absence of Jain ascetics in diaspora, we will sift through the endogenous sources of religious change, which can be attributed to influences from within the community, therefore making way for examining exogenous sources of influence later on in the chapter.

Demographic Realities

As has already been noted, the Leicester Jain community is a relatively small community comprising of roughly 1,500 Jains living in Leicester and smaller cities in its vicinity. Out of the 1,500 Leicester Jains, perhaps five hundred were regular visitors to the Leicester Jain Centre, who attended most of its bigger events and celebrations, with a small core of around sixty Jains visiting the temple almost on a daily basis and being in one way or another actively involved in its running.¹³⁹ Overall, the Leicester Jain community's numerical smallness (especially in a city of 330,000¹⁴⁰) often worked as a disadvantage to its members, especially when it came to socialising outside the Jain Centre. Since Jains comprised less than half a per cent of the Leicester population, it would have been rather difficult for Jains to randomly bump into other co-religionists while going to school or work, engaging in leisure activities, or simply running errands around town. There were no social groups that would be exclusively Jain outside the Jain Centre,¹⁴¹ or other groups that would be

¹³⁹ While some members held official positions on the Executive Committee of the organization (Jain Samaj [Europe], Leicester), others were involved in the running of the temple by occasionally leading elements of various rituals, working as *pathshala* teachers, helping in the creation of monthly *murti* decorations (*angi*), and actively participating in communal rituals.

¹⁴⁰ UK Census Data. "Leicester". Accessed 17th June 2018. <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/leicester-e06000016#sthash.EZpbOIPJ.dpbs>.

¹⁴¹ There was, of course, the Oswal Jain community, where Jains could meet other Jains outside the Leicester Jain Centre, but the Oswal group and the events they put on were also based on religious practice not socializing, were itinerant in nature since the Oswal community did not own property in Leicester, and there was also a significant overlap between the people attending Oswal events and

predominantly Jain that were not based on family ties or connections established at the Centre (unlike in Jamnagar [see *Chapter 6*]). As a consequence the Leicester Jain Centre became the main place for Leicester Jains to meet and socialise with other Jains alongside the homes of individual members. The Leicester Jain Centre therefore combined the two functions (religious and social) in a single space (as highlighted in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*). This characteristic, which was atypical for the non-diasporic environment of Jamnagar, can be chiefly attributed to the numerical smallness of the Leicester Jain community and counted as one of the major endogenous changes in the practice of Jainism in Leicester.

Furthermore, the numerical smallness of the Leicester Jains also had monetary and corporeal repercussions for the community. Firstly, as the Centre ran their day-to-day activities primarily on monetary donations from its members, the low numbers of Leicester Jains meant the lack of monetary funds for establishing and supporting more than one religious building (i.e., the Leicester Jain Centre). Additionally, there were also not enough Jains living in Leicester to maintain more than one religious site through their performance of rituals and attendance of events. In essence, the Leicester Jains could not afford to found another worship space, but they also did not need it. So while we may identify a single multi-sectarian worship space as a definite departure from the non-diasporic practice of Jainism, it is entirely in line with what the community needed and was able to afford.

The next demographic characteristic that plays a role, when we endeavour to identify religious changes engendered by migration, are the patterns of Jain residence in Leicester. While there were particular areas with slightly higher Jain population in Leicester (particularly around Melton Road and Naborough Road),¹⁴² the Leicester Jains lived scattered around the city in no clear concentrations. Given that the Leicester Jain Centre was located in the city centre and that the vast majority of its visitors lived in other parts of the city, in its suburbs, or even in other small towns in Leicester's immediate vicinity, it was rather difficult for most Leicester Jains to visit

those visiting the Leicester Jain Centre. Same is true for the Shrimad Rajchandra group, which put on exclusively religious events (i.e., weekly *satsangs*) and participated in the life of the Leicester Jain Centre as well.

¹⁴² The neighbourhoods with slightly higher proportions of Jains in Leicester follow the wider patterns of South Asian settlement in Leicester (see LCC 2008, 6; Phillips 1981).

the Jain Centre on a daily basis or even several times a week. That was especially the case for those engaged in paid employment, with caring responsibilities (for their children or elderly relatives), or with mobility issues (either due to not having access to a car or having physical mobility challenges due to age or illness), who lacked either the time or the opportunity to integrate visits to the Leicester Jain Centre into their routines. While those living nearby, studying at DeMontford University (with its campus just across the street from the Centre), or having fewer time commitments and more religious zeal were able to more easily visit the Jain Centre on a regular basis, that was not the case for most Leicester Jains, who mainly visited it on weekends or for bigger occasions.¹⁴³ The scattered residence patterns of Jains in Leicester therefore influenced the overall religious engagement of the community and posed an obstacle to a more integrated religious practice similar to the one widespread in Jamnagar.

The last demographic characteristic that pertains to endogenous religious change in Leicester Jainism is the one explored in *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)* – the migrational history of the community. The fact that the community was mainly composed of Gujarati ‘twice migrants’ and their offspring exerted an influence on the religious practice in their new environment and engendered a degree of religious change in their community. As was discussed in *Chapter 3*, the Leicester Jains’ migrational history disrupted the traditional transmission of religious knowledge between generations and led to a loss in religious knowledge and practice, which was further reinforced by the absence of ascetics in East Africa and Leicester. The migrational history of the Leicester Jain community and the broken chain of religious transmission that fractured over several generations, decades, and locations, found a reflection in the tri-partite generational structure of the community (as discussed in *Chapter 3*) and the Leicester Jain youth’s reinterpretation of the Jain tradition (examined in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*).

¹⁴³ There was no indication that the proximity of the Jain Centre played a role in people’s choice of residence – while an elderly couple did choose to live in an assisted living facility within walking distance from the Centre, I have not heard of any other Leicester Jains that followed their example.

Religious Infrastructure

As examined closely in *Chapter 5 (Transforming the Everyday)*, there was only one religious building the Leicester Jains owned, and due to their time commitments many Leicester Jains did not visit it on a regular basis. Geographical distance, work schedule, and other commitments all worked together to result in a decreased frequency of attendance at the Jain Centre for the performance of everyday rituals (such as *aarti*, *puja*, *samayik*, or *pratikraman*), which (as we saw in *Chapter 6: Echoes from India*) was a departure from a non-diasporic Jain practice.

In the summer of 2016 the low frequency of visitation actually led the leaders of the Leicester Jain Centre to a decision to close the Centre from two to six o'clock on workdays, as very few Jains tended to come during that time. While the practice of afternoon closure of the worship space is typical in Gujarat,¹⁴⁴ the Leicester Jain Centre did not model their interrupted opening times on the Indian practice, but did that in order to relieve the pressure on the Centre's servitor and *pujari* during the period after the 'priest' Jayeshbhai left the community for London and before the new 'priest' Hiteshbhai arrived.¹⁴⁵ Since there were not many Jains visiting in the afternoons anyway, and the Centre has two employees unfailingly present during opening times, the full-day opening times proved to be both unnecessary as well as costly. Although the new opening times were presented as temporary (only in place until the replacement for Jayeshbhai arrived), the move turned out to be permanent – in no doubt aided by the low demand for access during the closed times – as even after the new priest arrived at the end of 2016, the Jain Centre continued to operate on the interrupted schedule without much disagreement from the community.

As was already pointed out, the Jain Centre was characterised by a decreased frequency of attendance for the performance of everyday rituals. Instead of smaller,

¹⁴⁴ In Gujarat an afternoon (siesta-like) rest was widespread and corresponded to the afternoon closure times of *derasars*. The morning and evening times also saw different activities in the *derasars*, as the *murti* decorations (*angis*) were performed daily in Gujarat, thus preventing the performance of *puja* in the afternoon and evening. That was not the case in Leicester, where *angis* were only done occasionally and *puja* could be performed throughout the day.

¹⁴⁵ I have not used an alias, since Jayeshbhai is a very well known individual among Jains living in England and is easily recognizable by anyone familiar with the Leicester Jain community. The same holds true for Hiteshbhai – the 'priest' of the Leicester Jain Centre is an easily identifiable figure, who could not be kept anonymous by a simple use of a pseudonym.

individual, everyday rituals typical of India, the Leicester Jain community structured their worship around bigger, communal, and (in general) monthly rituals. The starkest difference between the Leicester Jain community and non-diasporic Jain communities was the rescheduling of bigger celebrations. Important events of the religious calendar – those that require a celebration, but fall on a weekday – were pushed to the nearest Sunday and celebrated then. Sundays were useful as celebration days for two reasons: firstly, because most people do not work on weekends and have had time to recover, therefore guaranteeing a higher attendance rate, and secondly, Sundays are socially sanctioned days of religious engagement in the UK (as elsewhere in culturally Christian countries) and thus Jain religious celebrations on those days can be construed as an expression of adaptation and social integration. Rescheduling traditional celebrations for Sundays was typical of diasporic Jain communities and was an expression of the difficulty Leicester Jains had in visiting the Jain Centre during the week, even for important celebrations.

Additionally, Sundays in the Leicester Jain Centre were also the chosen time for monthly *satsangs* (community gatherings focusing on a particular theme or ritual intended to bring the religious community together in worship), a form of collective practice uncommon in Gujarat.¹⁴⁶ At the beginning of every month a *satsang* was held on a Sunday, which regularly attracted over a hundred Leicester Jains (more, if it coincided with a bigger celebration) and gave them the opportunity to unite in worship (most often a *snatra puja* or a *samayik* was performed), meet other co-religionists, and learn from the ‘priest’ giving a sermon-like *vyakhyan*¹⁴⁷ (see Yang and Ebaugh 2001, 275-6). Such communal expressions of religiosity were in a sense performed also as community-formation events (see Vertovec 2000, 124-140).

Overall, with the decreasing everyday attendance of the Leicester Jain Centre, the importance of bigger communal rituals and events grew to the extent that monthly *satsangs* and other communal celebrations became seen as the norm in the Leicester Jain community, while daily individual rituals (such as *aarti* or *puja*) were

¹⁴⁶ The Shrimad Rajchandra group in Jamnagar did put on weekly *satsangs*. The Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Dharampur) used weekly *satsangs* as the foundation of their religious practice and groups around the world meet on Wednesday evenings for a similarly structured *satsang* (recitation of the *athma-siddhi*, viewing of a Zaveri lecture, discussion) – in Jamnagar as well as Leicester.

¹⁴⁷ As we will see shortly, the function of the *satsang* is also to transmit religious knowledge, which would otherwise be done by ascetics.

seen as additions and were mostly preformed by more religious individuals. In an informal survey I conducted among a hundred and twenty Jains attending the 2016 Paryushan celebrations, only 35% of the respondents said they visited the Jain Centre more frequently than about once a month (this included daily [3.5%], several times a week [20.3%], and several times a month [11%] visits) and 55% said they visited it monthly or less frequently (this included roughly monthly visits [22%], whenever there is a function/celebration [13.6%], only for bigger celebrations [9.3%], and once or twice a year [10.2%]). While these figures are based on a small sample of the community, they do point to a decreased frequency of regular attendance at the Jain Centre and the growing importance of bigger communal events for religious practice.

Compared to the non-diasporic environment of Jamnagar, the ritual emphasis therefore moved substantially – from frequent individual rituals to periodic communal ones. We can attribute this shift to the numerical smallness of the Leicester Jain community, the scattered residential patterns of its members, their limited religious infrastructure, the coupling of religious and social functions of the community, and the decreased frequency of attendance at the Jain Centre – all internal characteristics of the Leicester Jain community. As further evidence that the development of periodic communal rituals in Jain communities is caused by characteristics endogenous to a community (and not an influence from its environment), we can consider the case of the Digambar Jains in Jamnagar described in the previous chapter (*Chapter 6: Echoes from India*). As already stated, the Jamnagar Digambar community held weekly communal *dravya pujas*¹⁴⁸ in the local Digambar *mandir* for much the same reasons as the Leicester Jain community held monthly *satsangs*. There were a relatively small number of Digambar Jains living scattered around Jamnagar with only one major Digambar *mandir* available and many people did not drop by the *mandir* on a daily basis. Comparing the diasporic Leicester Jain community and the non-diasporic Jamnagar Digambar community we can see how similar internal characteristics of both communities engendered a similar response in their religious practice, no matter the (diasporic or non-diasporic) environment.

¹⁴⁸ Coincidentally, they were also held on Sundays.

Yet there was another reason for the blossoming of bigger – *communal* – rituals in the Leicester Jain community: the integration of the community's social functions into their religious building. As discussed above, it was difficult for Leicester Jains to meet and socialize with other fellow-Jains outside the Jain Centre and the homes of individual Jains. The Jain Centre thus performed both as a place of worship and a place where Jains could chat and socialise with their co-religionists. Combining the religious and social functions in a Jain Centre is characteristic of diasporic Jain communities and in Leicester in particular, the community-creation aspect has been present within the building since its acquisition and is central to the Centre's overall purpose (see Banks 1992, 159).

Yet the Jain Centre was not always available to the same extent – particularly for religious activities. In the early 1980s, when Marcus Banks was conducting his fieldwork, the building (which was later to become the Leicester Jain Centre) was just recently acquired and was still undergoing major renovations during and immediately after Banks's time in Leicester (ibid., 170-171). The *murtis* of *tirthankars* had not yet been brought over from India (that happened in 1985) and the official consecration ceremony (or *pratishtha*) in 1988 was yet to be completed. The partial and insufficient worship space as well as the lack of consecrated *murtis* influenced the variety of rituals Leicester Jains were able to perform – as Banks (ibid., 172) wrote in regards to *puja*:

The Leicester morning *puja* was an abbreviated and somewhat impoverished version of the Jain *puja* in India, or, more specifically, in Jamnagar. There are two reasons for this. First, many Jains at the Centre had little or no experience of *puja* in India and were simply unable to reproduce it in full (this was less true of the women, however). Secondly, the idol in Leicester temple (of Mahavira) had not at the time been consecrated, and therefore the standard *puja* of anointing (*anga puja*) could not be performed.

With the arrival of the *murtis* – and then later the Minister of Religion to provide guidance for the performance of rituals – the worship in the Jain Centre diversified into the array of ritual activities practiced today, primarily due to improved facilities. Today the Leicester Jains use the Jain Centre for a variety of worship practices: from evening *aartis*, sporadic *pujas*, and occasional *angi* decorations of the main *murtis*,

to the monthly *satsangs* centring on *snatra pujas* or *samayiks*, celebrations of bigger events such as *kalyanak* celebrations, and yearly Paryushan celebrations for the Shwetambar and Digambar Leicester Jains.

Jain Ascetics

The role and position of ascetics in Jainism has already been explored at various points in this thesis – *Chapter 3 (Historical Trajectory)* alluded to the broken chain of religious transmission due to the absence of ascetics in East Africa, *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)* explored the generational shift of religious authority in Leicester from external sources to the individuals themselves and the consequences that had for religious practice, while *Chapter 6 (Echoes from India)* further explored the role ascetics had for the laity in the non-diasporic setting of Jamnagar. This part of the thesis aims to bring all of these strands together and address the absence of ascetics in Leicester in a more comprehensive manner.

As was already described in *Chapter 1*, the Jain ascetics represent half of the traditional composition of Jain society (i.e., male ascetics, male householders or laity, female ascetics, female householders or laity) and embody the highest ideals of non-violence and austerity in modern Jain life. The teachings and virtues perfected in *tirthankars* are lived and transmitted by ascetics, who commit their lives to a life without family ties, possessions, modern (and not so modern) comforts, and household duties in search of self-realization and liberation. They constantly move from *upashray* to *upashray*, city to city, on bare feet and with all their necessities on their backs, sleeping on tiled floors in empty rooms without electricity, and relying on the kindness of the local population to supply them with food and water. They study Jain texts daily, perform *pratikraman* twice daily, and pull out their hair in the practice of *loch* two times a year. It is not only the ascetics that rely on the laity for food, shelter, and small necessities (like clothing, food collection bowls, notebooks, etc.), the laity also rely on ascetics to get something in return – not only the *karmic* benefits of helping a religious aspirant, but more practical benefits as well. Ascetics regularly preach, engage in private tuitions of more eager lay people, lead the laity in performance of *pratikaramans*, teach them religious songs (i.e., *stavans*), give them

blessings, as well as dispense advice on religious living and applying Jain teachings in everyday household life.

The role of ascetics in Jain communities is manifold; they are perceived as exemplars of religious living, sources of ‘good’ karma for the laity helping them with alms, bearers and communicators of religious knowledge, holders of religious authority, metaphorical enforcers of rules in Jain communities (through their gentle – and sometimes not so gentle – encouragement of the laity to adopt progressively more ‘advanced’ Jain practices), as well as sources of religious structure for measuring the passing of time in terms of the spiritual and the transcendent. Jain ideals, knowledge, authority, *karmic* and social power are all embodied in individual ascetics as well in the category of ascetics as an abstraction. Yet all of those aspects are absent in Leicester. Due to ascetics being bound to travel only by foot and relying on uninterrupted support from the laity, the Leicester Jains do not live alongside embodiments of ideal Jain life, they cannot procure ‘good *karma*’ from supporting Jain mendicants, they cannot learn from a source imbued with the highest religious authority, they are not surrounded by prompts to further commit to Jain practice, and they cannot rely on the ascetics for outlining a religiously structured time. And the absence of ascetics in Leicester plays a vital role in the story of religious change in their community.

Jayeshbhai

The biggest adaptation to the absence of ascetics in the Leicester Jain community was personified in the position of the ‘Minister of Religion’¹⁴⁹ or the ‘priest’ (as I will refer to it for the sake of simplicity). At the time of my fieldwork and for roughly fifteen years before that, the priest of the Jain Centre was Jayeshbhai, a tall forty-something man from Gujarat.¹⁵⁰ With his booming voice, engaging rhetoric, and kind disposition he captured the attention of Leicester Jains whenever he spoke

¹⁴⁹ The ‘Minister of Religion’ title was used in the official advertisements for the position, though not used in everyday speech. The position was actually never identified in my interviews and conversations, it was simply referred to by the name of the position-holder, i.e., Jayeshbhai.

¹⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, Jayeshbhai left the Leicester Jain Centre in autumn 2016, shifted to the Oswal Centre in Potters Bar, London, and was replaced by Hiteshbhai. Since Hiteshbhai arrived to Leicester after the conclusion of my fieldwork, I will not include him in this discussion.

and was universally respected for his knowledge and devotion. He came to Leicester in 2001 answering an advertisement from the Leicester Jain Centre circulated in Gujarati newspapers and through other Jain channels in Gujarat searching for someone “devoted [to the] Jain Tradition [sic.] with sound knowledge of all sects of Jainism and ability to preach and communicate Jain teachings to a wide range of audiences.”¹⁵¹



Image 33: Jayeshbhai preaching (image by the author)

Although I was not able to reconstruct a precise history of the position in the Leicester Jain Centre through my interviews (the narratives of earlier priests were often muddled with personal judgements and minor scandals), it is generally clear that the position was established in the early 1990s after a need was identified by the leadership of the Jain Centre for guidance in religious celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals. Before Jayeshbhai the role of the priest and the *pujari*¹⁵² were joined and a

¹⁵¹ Quotation taken from the advertisement for the Minister of Religion position published in 2016. Although it likely does not match perfectly the advertisement Jayeshbhai responded to, it gives a good understanding of the position. Source: Jain Centre Leicester webpage. “Vacancy – Minister of Religion.” (No longer available.)

¹⁵² The *pujari* is responsible for preparing ritual paraphernalia, occasionally guides specific rituals (like the *snatra puja* or *aarti*), and prepares food for communal meals after bigger events. He does not

single person was employed for all religious aspects of running the Centre. There were at least three previous priests, who all left the Centre after a handful of years (all served less than five years) either to return to India or engage in other ventures. It was with the arrival of Jayeshbhai that the community was able to establish a deeper bond with a priest-figure and that Jayeshbhai developed into the charismatic preacher that he was for many English Jains in mid-2010s (an elderly Leicester Jain said Jayeshbhai was just “a simple village man” when he first arrived). With his knowledge, devotion, and charisma he spread his influence among the Leicester Jains and eventually started receiving requests to perform bigger celebrations, house-warming *pujas*, and Jain weddings elsewhere in England. He was seen not only as an excellent priest, but also a personal inspiration, as Bharatbhai (whom we have met in *Chapter 3* and then again in *Chapter 4*) explained:

BHARATBHAI: Because shravak is hundred per cent – he follows the god’s word. That is shravak. And shravika – god, whatever god says, she follows that. So we are not called shravak. There’re very few. Like Jayeshbhai, he’s a shravak. Because he follows each and every word of god.

ANJA: [...] And you learn from Jayeshbhai as well?

BHARATBHAI: Oh, yes. A lot. He’s like a guru. He has got great things. He’s great. Nobody can beat him. Nobody. I tell you. Even, see, when in India, it’s very difficult to find a man like him. India even. One in a million you find like Jayeshbhai. Never gets angry, he’s all the time happy. For last sixteen years I’ve been with him all the time, like his right hand, but I know he’s great. Very – what you call it – high quality soul, you know. Very high.

With Jayeshbhai the position of the priest became a well-established role in the Jain Centre and is currently one of three paid positions in the Centre.¹⁵³ Although the focus of the priest is on religious dissemination, he is also responsible for administration and donation collection. Below is a screen-shot of the

engage in religious education and the *pujari* employed at the time of writing (and roughly ten years before that) was actually not a Jain.

¹⁵³ Alongside the *pujari* (also from India, though Rajasthan) and the servitor or care-taker (a jovial local Englishman, who has been with the Centre since the very beginning).

advertisement¹⁵⁴ used in the search for a new priest in 2016 detailing the duties and responsibilities expected of the position.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Duties and Responsibilities will be:

- To preach Jain teachings and carry out pastoral work for devotees and interested parties.
- To organize and conduct regular Jain rituals and religious activities sessions for the community including weekends.
- To organize and lead regular discussion sessions to improve the understanding of Jainism among the community.
- To offer support to religious weekend classes for children.
- To conduct morning Prakshal (Abhishek) & Puja, and arrange Aartis and carry out prayers and blessings to devotees, when necessary.
- To organise and lead monthly Satsangs (Devotees retreat) and other Special religious and cultural days in the Jain calendar (Paryushans, Pratikramans, Diwali, Nutan Varsh, Gyan Pancham, Maun Ekadeshi, Aymbil olies, kalyananks, poonams / pat darshan / bhav yatras, dhaja badali, chaityaparipati and pujans e.g. snatra, panchkalyanak puja, sattarbhedhi puja etc.
- To carry out administrative duties such as answering the telephone, maintain the events' diary, receive donations and encourage devotees to donate etc.
- To recruit, train and coordinate local volunteers for regular events and teaching.
- To offer counselling and welfare support to the community.
- To oversee health and safety, fire assessment, risk management and disability issues.
- To perform any other reasonable duties and services as and when requested by the executive committee.

Image 34: Minister of Religion advertisement

The job advertisement identifies the major elements of the priest's job as: preaching, organising *satsangs* and other religious celebrations, conducting rituals, leading discussions, supporting the *pathshala*, and performing general pastoral work (alongside other administrative duties). While not all of the duties identified are in the domain of ascetics in non-diasporic Jain environments, the major emphases of the position (preaching, religious guidance, pastoral work) are clearly ways the Leicester Jain community tried to counterbalance the unavailability of ascetics and substitute the roles they play in lay Jainism.

Jayeshbhai performed much of the work traditionally done by ascetics in non-diasporic communities. He gave *vyakhyans* (or sermons) during *satsangs* and other communal events, he taught two weekly religious classes for adults in the Sthanakvasi *upashray*, he advised people on religious matters, and encouraged them to commit to further Jain practices (e.g., more advanced rituals, more frequent visits

¹⁵⁴ Jain Centre Leicester webpage. "Vacancy – Minister of Religion" (No longer available.)

to the temple, or stricter behavioural restrictions). Jayeshbhai was also seen as one of the most knowledgeable Jains in Leicester, was invested with a high degree of religious authority (due to his position and knowledge), led his life as an example to be emulated by other Leicester Jains,¹⁵⁵ enabled the Leicester Jains to follow a religiously structured time (due to the various religious rituals and events he led), and even gave blessings to other lay Jains (with *kesar* powder he pressed on the top of their heads).

Yet despite the work Jayeshbhai performed for the Leicester Jain community and the roles he played to counterbalance the absence of ascetics, the ascetic absence remained a big influence on the performance of Jainism in Leicester and was not replaced by the position of a priest (as we will see shortly). Regardless of the amount of knowledge or religious authority Jayeshbhai possessed, he was nonetheless a married layman, who lived within a society and was bound by its rules. He did not give up household duties, family ties, possessions, or modern comforts in search of liberation and was therefore not elevated to the same status as ascetics are. He was simply seen as a knowledgeable and devoted layman, who was employed to serve and guide the community of diasporic Jains.

Studying the Absence

While it is difficult enough to draw definitive conclusions about influences on religious practice and change when those influences are present, when they are absent it becomes nigh on impossible. Instead, I offer an assortment of simple propositions on what changes might have been engendered by the absence of Jain ascetics in Leicester and why they occurred.

To start where we finished – with Jayeshbhai. As was argued above, Jayeshbhai can be seen as a tangible response to the absence of ascetics in Leicester and he assumed many of the roles and responsibilities of ascetics. Yet the power and reach of his religious authority was curtailed by his status as a married householder and – I want to propose – by the wariness of the community to over-invest authority in a single (lay) person. As was already mentioned above, the religious authority in India

¹⁵⁵ Many (particularly older) men and women were seen as model lay Jains due to their knowledge, devotion, or behavioural conformity to strict Jain rules as well.

is invested in the ascetics as an abstraction of which individual ascetics are a representation, while Jayeshbhai was not a member of any such abstract grouping to draw authority from. Consequently, there were no individuals to easily replace him and an over-dependence on him could cause problems, as was seen in mid-2016, when Jayeshbhai announced his move to an Oswal-run *derasar* in Potters Bar at the northern edge of London (see Shah, Dwyer, and Gilbert 2011). With his announcement came a wave of shock permeating the community and then a several-months-long process of finding an adequate substitute.

Furthermore, the wariness of over-investment of authority into a single person extended to doctrinal matters as well. In India ascetics are continually on the move and in a particular locality (like Jamnagar) individual ascetics always change. The invariability of teachings and doctrinal interpretations despite the always-changing faces that express them establishes those views as timeless expressions of an ultimate truth for the laity receiving them. This cannot be said for Leicester, where religious guidance was given by a single individual – Jayeshbhai. As a consequence, the Leicester Jain community moved not towards a centralisation of authority in the figure of the priest, but adopted a more dispersed and individualised view of religious authority. As was demonstrated most clearly in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, the ultimate authority of doctrinal interpretation in Leicester lay primarily with the individuals, who themselves decided what made sense for them and what elements of Jainism they adopted and practiced. Without a stabilising central figure invested with the ultimate religious authority (either in the form of ascetics as a group, or Jayeshbhai in particular), the individual Leicester Jains started interpreting elements of Jain doctrine and practice in their own ways and holding themselves as the prime arbiters of correct interpretation.

Examples of such flourishing of religious innovations were most readily available among the youth (as seen in *Chapter 4*), but could also be observed among other Leicester Jains. Let me highlight Ashwinbhai, an economist around forty years of age (thus a member of the ‘sandwich generation’ discussed in *Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*), who talked about his own interpretation of the *kal-chakra* (Jainism’s cyclical conception of time, which involves movements through six progressively worse time periods before shifting to six progressively better eras and

then forever repeating the pattern) as a circling of our universe around a spiritually powerful star on an off-centre ellipsoid orbit, which explained the fluctuations in spiritual aptitude associated with the individual eras of the *kal-chakra*. Or Kalaben, a widowed woman in her eighties, who did not agree with the orthodox conception of hell and heaven as being geographically distinct areas of the Jain universe, but instead saw them as different modalities of the human life on Earth, where a devoted and kind person might be living in heaven just next to a person living in hell due to their violent and unethical life.

It is the doctrinal diversity present in the Leicester Jain community that I argue is the most noticeable consequence of ascetic absence in Leicester.¹⁵⁶ Without the embodiments of the highest living Jain authority – the ascetics – to provide religious guidance and ensure a level of doctrinal homogeneity and orthodoxy (as argued in *Chapter 6: Echoes from India*), the Leicester Jains started looking to themselves for answers. This turn towards individual authority (typical of the ‘subjective turn’ explored in *Chapter 4*, but also a consequence of the absence of traditional *external* authority) resulted in personalised solutions to individual religious queries, not all of which were in line with the orthodox interpretations of Jainism (that would be otherwise propounded by the ascetics). In this way the Leicester environment offered fertile ground for the flourishing of new, personalised, and innovative styles of Jain practice and interpretations of Jain doctrine, styles that could not have blossomed under the watchful eyes of Jain ascetics.

Exogenous Influences

Having looked at the internal characteristics of the Leicester Jain community that can be identified as giving rise to changes in religious practice, we now move to the external influences that affect the Leicester Jains in search of exogenous reasons for religious change. We start with the influences and the corresponding changes that can be linked to the specific context of the Leicester Jain community – from the physical to the social features of their immediate environment. Then we will

¹⁵⁶ I am not the first one to argue that. Marcus Banks (1992, 200) already wrote: “In Leicester, without ascetics to control or guide, a wide variety of religious beliefs could thrive among the Sramanis.”

transition into the more conceptual environment of the community and look at the wider social trends they are a part of, taking a specific interest in the religious discourse surrounding the Leicester Jains.

The Leicester Environment

The weather encountered by Jains in Leicester is an oft-repeated topic of discussion and complaint in the Leicester Jain community, not only as a form of small talk typical of England in general, or as a shared nostalgia for warmer climates (of either India or East Africa), but a factor affecting religious life as well. Compared with the three-seasoned climate of Gujarat with a relatively stable weather and fairly fixed sunrise and sunset times throughout the year, the cooler, wetter, and more capricious weather of Leicester is an unwelcome consequence of migration, though the aspect needing to be addressed from a religious viewpoint are the sunrise and sunset times. More observant Leicester Jains followed the dietary rule demanding no food or drinks be consumed after sunset and before sunrise (as mentioned in *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*), which became a problem especially in winter. Since the sun rises around eight or nine o'clock in the morning and sets between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, observant Jains were only able to eat for approximately six hours a day, leaving those employed in nine-to-five jobs particularly unable to follow the regulation, while even retired individuals might not have been able to comply with this particular aspect of Jain dietary restrictions due to their evening medication. While the strict observance of the *rātri-bhojan* prohibition was not pervasive in India (Cort 2001, 129-130), the geographical position of Leicester further impacted the ability of Jains to follow certain dietary restrictions and contributed to the gradual loosening of Jain dietary rules observed in Leicester (as discussed in *Chapter 5*).

To expand our focus from the immediate physical environment of the community to their social context – probably the most obvious differences in the social environment of Leicester Jains are the use of English as the official and ubiquitous language of communication, and the Jains' ethnic minority status. Most older Leicester Jains spoke Gujarati as their mother tongue and struggled with elaborate communication in English. Conversely, the youth were more comfortable communicating in English, although there were fluent in conversational Gujarati (as

explored in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*). The linguistic struggle marked particularly older Jains as different from the English-speaking mainstream and often prevented them from venturing into non-Gujarati-speaking social circles. Yet even the youth's mastery of English did not mask their ethnic difference in relation to the majority of English inhabitants. While Leicester was arguably one of the most diverse cities in the UK (the 2011 census predicted Leicester to be the first British city, where the ethnic minority populations would outgrow the local White population – or have done so already [LCC 2008, 5]), the image of the typical White Englishman still loomed large and dominated the interpretation of hegemonic Englishness. As a community, which was composed of Indians using Gujarati as their primary medium of communication, and following a little known religion, the Leicester Jains deviated from the hegemonic Englishness encapsulated in the White, English-speaking, and historically/culturally Protestant Britons (see Nye and Weller 2012, 36).

A diasporic group like the Leicester Jains was also in a doubly problematic position; not only were they seen as 'others' in their country of settlement and marginalised due to them not conforming to the hegemonic idea of what Englishness is and looks like, but were also on the margins of their own global religious community – through being physically removed from the lands of traditional settlement of Jainism, being smaller in size and recognisability, and not being able to access the traditional figures of religious authority (see Yang and Ebaugh 2001, 272). Though this 'living in the double margins' limited them and put them at a disadvantage in some ways, the 'double margin' they occupied was also a place of reflection, innovation, and change.

Another major influence on the practice of Jainism in Leicester was Jainism's general anonymity among the local non-Jain population. Due to the general unawareness of Leicester non-Jains of what Jainism is, Leicester Jains regularly needed to function as ad-hoc 'Jain ambassadors' in the world, constantly explaining Jain beliefs and practices, often in a reductive manner and in categories most familiar to their interlocutors, which affected their own understanding of Jainism. A need arose to understand Jainism better in order to be able to adequately explain it to non-Jain 'others' resulting in exploration of topics expected to be of importance in such

conversations and a structuring of knowledge in categories most familiar to the intended audience. An anecdote recounted to me by a teenaged girl in the Leicester Jain Centre speaks to the ubiquity of people's unawareness of Jainism (and their familiarity with reductive – perhaps Abrahamic or at least monotheistic – templates of religion). Tanvi told me that while many of her Jain peers had to replace their teachers in Religious Education classes at their local schools and present Jainism to their classmates themselves, she did not have to do that. Instead the teacher explained to the class that Mahavir was the last and most important *tirthankar* of Jainism and that every Jain temple had his statue as their main object of worship. When Tanvi confronted her with the example of the Leicester Jain Centre, where Shanti-nath was the main *murti*, she refused to believe it and quarrelled with Tanvi insisting that she must be mistaken. When recounting the story, Tanvi conveyed her shock at being challenged about her own religious tradition, yet grouped the experience under the general ignorance of English non-Jains about Jainism that Leicester Jains faced every day.

Another feature of Jain diasporic living was the fact that religious traditions in diaspora typically undergo a degree of change partially due to the radical alteration in their cultural environments, as has been argued by Raymond Breton (2012, 58-70). Individuals begin distinguishing “between the elements of their religious and of their ethnocultural or national traditions, between what defines them as belonging to a particular religion in contrast to a particular ethnic culture” (ibid., 60). A similar thing occurred among the Leicester Jains as well; with the religious practice moving from the Indian cultural context, where it was deeply embedded in daily life, understood by the wider society, and accepted as a part of the norm, to a radically different English culture, where it needed to be established anew in relation to its new environment, the Leicester Jains responded with a differentiation between ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ in their practice (as is often the case for diasporic communities [see Jacobson 1997]). Wanting to integrate into their new surroundings, the Leicester Jains began to slowly un-weave the centuries old enmeshment of Jain and Gujarati culture. Such differentiation between religion and culture can also be glanced from the below excerpt from the focus group I conducted with the Leicester Jain youth.

REENA: I always say that like, 'I'm Jain', so then I explain about like how it's a lifestyle... Non-violence. And then I always say like I also worship some Hindu gods, cause I think a lot...

KEVAL: As in the devs and devis [gods and goddesses]?

REENA: And like Ganpati [Ganesh]. And we sometimes go to the mandir as well.

KEVAL: I think that's more of a cultural thing, because before the derasar was here, everyone used to go to mandirs. Because there was no derasar and the closest thing they could find...

REENA: But I feel like even in India, like a lot of people, you still would... like Ganpati and...

KEVAL: But I think that's literally an Indian festival, so all Indians sort of get involved.

VIVEK: No, not the festival. Like a lot of Jains will worship... If you go to a Jain's house you will have like...

KEVAL: Oh, even at our house Ganpati, because that's just like an... It's a cultural symbol for clearing obstacles. So although it's from the Hindu religion, I think it's more cultural.

This particular exchange between Reena, Keval, and Vivek is an example of a deliberate and joint differentiation between Jainism and the Indian culture it was traditionally situated in and enmeshed with. Yet most of the religion–culture differentiation happens subconsciously and spontaneously in situations that present themselves to the Leicester Jains and is a result of existing in a new cultural context, particularly one marked by religious pluralism and secularisation (Breton 2012, 72).

Such un-weaving of ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ was also often combined with a focus on religious fundamentals. As was detailed in *Chapter 2 (Leicester Jains as Diaspora)*, Knott (2009) proposed a four-fold community-formation process for diasporic religious communities that comprised of institutionalisation, (re)traditionalisation, standardisation, and production of community. For our discussion the processes of (re)traditionalisation and standardisation (which often happen alongside one another) are particularly interesting, as they describe a process of revitalising religious traditions through minimisation of internal differences and accentuation of perceived similarities. Yang and Ebaugh (2001, 278-281) also described a process similar to Knott’s that connects different people with diverse backgrounds, sectarian affiliations, and migration histories into a single community –

what they termed as a “return to theological foundations,”¹⁵⁷ or a return to “the original founder and/or some historic, authoritative leaders of the religion, and to the commonly recognized holy scriptures” in order to achieve a consensus among a diverse group of people connected by a religious tradition (ibid., 279). While in Leicester such a ‘return to theological foundations’ was not necessarily based on ethnic diversity (an important element for Yang and Ebaugh), the broader sectarian bases for intra-group delineations were nevertheless rejected and a broader religious identity on the basis of fundamental religious beliefs common to all was adopted. As was explored in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, the individual sectarian affiliations diminished in importance and a common pan-Jain identity took precedence, particularly among the Leicester Jain youth.

Yet the pan-Jain identity was not limited to the younger generation of Leicester Jains and could regularly be encountered among other Jains as well. The approach of accentuating commonalities and downplaying differences between different branches of Jainism was often expressed in the sentiment of ‘Jain first’ – that all Leicester Jains are firstly and most importantly Jains, and Derawasi, Sthanakvasi, Digambar, or Srimad Rajchandra second. At one of my visits to a *pathshala* class a teacher explaining to his pupils about Digambar Jainism transitioned to such pan-Jain discourse by saying: “*We’re all Jain. We’re Jain first. But then people are divided into sects,*” before concluding by instructing the children to go into every Jain temple, no matter its sectarian affiliation, because they are all Jain temples and the children are all Jain. This pan-Jain sentiment was visible not only through such conscious articulation and pan-community events, but also in the building itself. As described in *Chapter 5 (Transforming the Everyday)*, the multi-sectarian worship space of the Leicester Jain Centre – set up to honour the differences in beliefs and practices among Leicester Jains – contributed to the building of a pan-Jain identity as it subsumed the sectarian diversity of the community into one space, though nevertheless centring it around a dominating expression of Jainism (i.e., Derawasi Jainism).

In addition to the religious consequences of the Leicester Jains’ pan-Jainism, the emphasis on unity and cooperation held significance for their perception of *jati*

¹⁵⁷ Raymond Breton (2012, 113) termed this process “pristinization.”

identity as well. We can start to observe the gradual loosening of *jati*'s grip on the Leicester Jain community, if we take another look at Banks's work (1992) and the change in self-referring nomenclature used by the Leicester Jains between his fieldwork and mine. While Banks's informants used 'the Jain Samaj' (Jain community) to refer to the people and activities of Leicester Jainism (ibid., 159), the phrase I typically heard was 'the Jain Centre' as referring to the building and the religious activities undertaken within it. This slight shift from 'community' to 'Centre' potentially signals the consolidation of the 'religious' and '*jati*' identities of the Leicester Jain community that were somewhat at odds in the early to mid 1980s.

Banks (ibid., 214-215) identified three phases of the Leicester Jain community's development during the first decade of its formal existence, where two different identities were singled out as potential strategies for community's further development. (1) During the initial Srimali–Oswal alliance the 'religious' identity was at the fore as the identity 'Jain' connected members of the two *jatis*, followed by (2) the equal strength of the 'religious' and '*jati*' identities after the split between Shrimalis and Oswals in 1977, and (3) the return to a 'religious' identity after the purchase of the building that was to become the Jain Centre in 1978 and the modified alliance between the two Leicester Jain *jatis*. Banks wrote that during his fieldwork only a subsection of the Jain Centre's membership fully embraced the emphasis on 'religious' identity as the developmental principle of the organisation, while the majority still saw the 'Jain Samaj (Europe), Leicester' as a mix of a religious and a *jati* organisation, oscillating between the two as the guiding principle of how the Leicester Jain Centre should function and develop in the future.

The repeatedly used label 'Jain Centre' (instead of 'Jain Samaj') thus might have been a remnant of the complete shift towards a 'religious' identity now fully embraced by the vast majority of the Jain Centre's membership. Shifting from the emphasis on people (the 'community') that were arguably Jain 'by birth' (and thus by *jati*), to an emphasis on the building itself (the 'centre'), which is open to anyone interested and sympathetic to the Jain tradition, signals the rise of the unified 'religious' identity in the Leicester Jain community and the demise of *jati* identification.

The picture Banks painted of the Shrimali–Oswal *jati* relationship in the early 1980s had slightly altered by the time I arrived to Leicester in mid-2010s as well. He wrote (*ibid.*, 160):

By the time I was working in Jamnagar [1983], relations between the two *jatis* were cool but not hostile: members of each *jati* had their own clearly separate occupational and residential domains and organized their religious functions entirely separately. Neither *jati* made any demands on the other. [...] However, it would be wrong to make too much of this antagonism.

A few pages onward (*ibid.*, 171), Banks continued: “In turn [for using the previously joint finances for opening the Jain Centre and keeping the name of the Jain Samaj], the Srimali leadership had to promise to effect a reconciliation with the Leicester Oswals – a process which, to my knowledge, is still not complete.” It could be said that the reconciliation process was still incomplete in mid-2010s, since the Leicester Oswals continued to independently organise their own Paryushan celebrations in hired halls and continued to support the local chapter of the Oswal Association of the UK as a religious and *jati* organisation. Yet I would argue that the two organisations – the ‘Jain Samaj (Europe), Leicester’ (or the Jain Centre) and the Leicester chapter of the ‘Oswal Association of the UK’ – have reached an equilibrium, where the Jain Centre was based around its ‘religious’ identity, while the Oswal Association fulfilled a mix of religious and *jati* needs (besides holding Paryushan celebrations, they organised a handful of ‘cultural’ programmes per year primarily aimed at building solidarity among its members). The two identities discussed above – the ‘religious’ and ‘*jati*’ identity – that had the potential to guide the development of the Jain Centre thus found their expression in two different groups: the Leicester Jain Centre (of the ‘Jain Samaj [Europe], Leicester’) became an organisation almost exclusively foregrounding their ‘religious’ identity, while the Leicester Oswal Association prioritised their ‘*jati*’ identity over their ‘religious’ one. Such a divergence of corporate identities and a servicing of different needs by the two organisations enabled Leicester Jains of both *jatis* to further advance the reconciliation process started in 1980.

Although the two organisations still had nominally different membership structures, the *jati* identity overall lost its purchase and had gradually decreased in

importance among the Leicester Jains. Besides individual cross-*jati* relationships observed by Banks, there was now a more cordial relationship between the two *jatis* – many Oswals attended religious functions organised at the Leicester Jain Centre (particularly the morning programmes during Paryushan and many other bigger functions) and many Shrimalis attended the events put on by the Leicester Oswals (if they did not overlap with functions at the Jain Centre). While the two *jati* groups remained organisationally separate, their members intermingled and utilised the resources offered by both organisation, based on their needs, levels of commitment, and time.

Wider Social Trends

Before we begin exploring the individual societal aspects and shifts manifesting themselves among the Leicester Jains, it is important to note why they have such purchase in the community at all. Here I want to argue that there is a particular generational dimension to the influence of the English society on the Leicester Jain community and that social forces are shaping the practice of religion primarily through the younger generations of Leicester Jains (which can be seen in the different religious interpretations they have adopted [see *Chapter 4*]). As the older generations of Leicester Jains arrived in Leicester in the 1970s, they were greeted with a wave of xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment that swept the UK after the arrival of a large number of South Asians fleeing East African policies of discrimination and expulsion (as discussed in *Chapter 1*). They were perceived as a threat, as intruders, and as people who could not fit into the English society, which influenced the immigrants' own identification as 'outsiders' to the English society. With the younger generations being born and growing up in a more ethnically diverse and more welcoming United Kingdom that did not single them out as 'others,' came a generational shift in their identification from being the 'outsider' to being an 'insider' of the English society. Parallel to the integration of successive generations of migrants, the younger Leicester Jains felt a sense of belonging, ownership, and security in the UK that was not afforded to their older relatives (see Norris and Inglehart 2012, Portes and Zhou 1993, Schwartz et al. 2010, Thomson

and Crul 2007). With the ‘outsider–insider’ shift in the community¹⁵⁸ the doors opened to the influences of the wider social trends that mark other spheres of English society (explored below). The Leicester Jain youth also became more outward looking in their attitudes toward Jainism – they desired for others to understand Jainism and routinely presented the tradition to their non-Jain friends. With the openness of the young Leicester Jains to the wider English society, the wider social trends and shifts gained a foothold in the Leicester Jain community and exerted their influence on the practice of Jainism in Leicester.¹⁵⁹

The first social trend we will examine is the liberalisation of the English society; with that I mean the broader relaxing of social rules in spheres like gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and so on. In general the UK has undergone a significant loosening of behavioural rules in the decades after the Second World War (see Brown and Lynch 2012), with particularly young people rejecting traditionalist tendencies in politics and everyday life. The liberalism of the wider society was reflected in the young Leicester Jains as well – in their calls for gender equality in religious practice, their rejection of caste and sectarianism, and their deviation from the strict behavioural rules of Jainism (as explored in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*) – thus contributing to the creation of a distinct form of Jainism that is markedly English.

The next big trend that is familiar to the Religious Studies scholars as well as to the ‘uninitiated’ observers, is secularisation (see Breton 2012, 72-73). Although there have been many quarrels over what secularisation is and whether it even exists (for a good overview see Davidson Hunter et al. 2006), I am adopting Linda Woodhead’s broad understanding of secularisation as “the process whereby religion declines in personal and social significance” (2012, 28) and especially in the power to influence

¹⁵⁸ The shift from ‘outsider’ to ‘insider’ identification may be connected with prolonged education of most young Leicester Jains as well. An economist in his mid-twenties actively identified education that emphasises critical thinking and encourages questioning of presumptions as an important factor in his critical approach to Jain doctrine and his self-identification as a ‘spiritual’ Jain. Elements of youth’s Jainism such as critical examination of doctrine, demand for detailed explanations of rituals, and prioritisation of ethical teachings can be linked to the prolonged periods spent in school, where critical attitudes are adopted alongside a more integrative ‘insider’ perception of the English society.

¹⁵⁹ Given that wider social trends exert the greatest impact on the younger generation of the Leicester Jain community, most of the examples given in this section come from *Chapter 4*, which focused particularly on the youth’s practice of Jainism.

public opinion. While the Leicester Jain Centre cannot claim to influence the public opinion, it nevertheless has sway over the group of Leicester Jains attending it. Yet (as was shown in *Chapter 4*) the Jain Centre continues to have progressively less influence over individuals as we move down the generational ladder, with the middle generation of parents (the ‘sandwich generation’) and the youth visiting the Centre less often, participating in fewer communal activities, taking on fewer roles within the organisational structure of the Centre, performing religious activities less often, and (in case of the youth) ascribing less importance to Jainism in general (by describing it as a ‘way of life’).

Another manifestation of a wider social trend in the community’s practice of Jainism is also the gradual transition toward making religion and religious practice more individual and private (see Breton 2012, 83-88). This shift in emphasis from the institutional to the personal is similar to the ‘subjective turn’ described in *Chapter 4* (and revisited below), but could also be characterised as the change religion undergoes in regards to identity formation – “religion remains significant for the personal identity of individuals but not so much for their social identity” (ibid., 84). The general sentiment of prioritising the individual above the community was expressed in the practice of (particularly young) Leicester Jains. The swapping of public, communal celebrations (like *snatra pujas* or processions) for private, solitary introspections (like meditation) could be viewed as the result of a successful socialisation into the English understanding of religion as something that should be kept to oneself and done away from the eyes of others.

Furthermore, with the growing popularity and acceptance of alternative and holistic spiritualities, a discursive shift in discussions of religion occurred and spread, which rejected facets of ‘traditional religion’ in favour of what were deemed ‘spiritual’ practices, the fluidity of traditions, and the rejection of external authorities. The process described by Heelas and Woodhead (2005) as the ‘subjective turn’ (detailed in *Chapter 4*) impacted the Leicester Jain community, not least in the adoption of the label ‘spiritual’ by many young Jains (as well as some members of the ‘sandwich generation’) and their continued characterisation of Jainism not as a ‘religion’ but as a ‘way of life.’ Moreover, the instilment of the highest religious authority in one’s self, the selective adoption and rejection of individual doctrines as

well as rituals, and the youth's focus on contemplation and introspection are all specific examples of the wider trend encapsulated by the 'subjective turn' from 'life-as' to 'subjective-life' forms of religious practice impacting the religious life in the UK more broadly.

In combination with the above-discussed secularisation of the English society and the 'subjective turn' towards a more private and individualised expression of religiosity, also appeared two 'side-effects' of religion's diminishing role in individuals' lives – the supremacy of scientific explanations of the world, and the shrinking importance of religious literacy in a person's skill set.

The growing dominance of scientific discourse was reflected in the Leicester Jain community's (and particularly its youth's) adoption of the ontological validity of scientific explanations and their adjustment of Jain ontology to correspond to scientific findings. The validation of Jain doctrines through references to science was not limited to the diaspora (and was encountered in Jamnagar as well¹⁶⁰), yet such claims were accompanied by the erosion of Jain metaphysical beliefs at odds with scientific explanations among the Leicester Jains. Abandoning Jainism's structure of the universe or its conceptions of time was typical of younger Leicester Jains and even middle-aged (or some older) Jains occasionally expressed scepticism of Jain metaphysics, some actively searching for solutions to reconcile the Jain understanding of the world with scientific models (like Ashwinbhai, who explained the Jain movement of time periods by combining the Jain doctrine with astronomical discoveries and positing an existence of a powerful spiritual star).

With the rise in importance of science as an explanatory tool also came the decline in the importance of religious literacy as a valued and marketable skill (for a general discussion see Dinham and Francis 2015). The English society in general places little social emphasis on a person's religiosity and thus parents of Leicester Jains adopted a similar view – particularly in relation to the employability and economic security of their offspring. Since religious literacy does not serve a clear purpose in most working environments (very few jobs require detailed religious knowledge – especially of Jainism – to be performed adequately), the Jain parents

¹⁶⁰ Some examples of such claims include assertions that Mahavir-swami predicted the existence of atoms and bacteria, and that the Jain proscription against eating after sunset is supported by medical discoveries.

emphasised non-religious activities in the distribution of their children's time as well. Few school-aged, university-going, or even employed Leicester Jains prioritised religiosity above developing skills and acquiring knowledge socially deemed more valuable (either in terms of their financial, social, or cultural capital) or useful for employability purposes.

The Invisible Hand of Discourse

As was mentioned in the introduction already, the discussion presented in this chapter is somewhat speculative – while the exploration of internal characteristics influencing the religious practice of Leicester Jains was closer to the micro-level ethnography that supported it, my consideration of external forces impacting Leicester Jainism already veered into inductive postulating that is more difficult to support with on-the-ground examples. Yet I will conclude this section with an even more speculative range of propositions concerning the impact of discourse on Leicester Jains' practice. Here I limit myself to certain features of the discourse on religion in particular, as some elements of the wider social discourse in which Leicester Jains are embedded have already been examined above – for example, liberalisation, secularisation, the 'subjective turn,' and the dominance of scientific discourse (all arguably part of the discourse on religion as well) have already been discussed in my consideration of wider social trends affecting the practice of Jainism in Leicester. In this last segment I want to consider exogenous influences, which are particularly difficult to substantiate with fieldwork examples, yet are conceivably influencing the Leicester Jain community in implicit, indirect, and unacknowledged ways that nevertheless leave a mark on the diasporic practice of Jainism. Two in particular are worth highlighting despite their speculative nature – the 'World Religions Paradigm' and the doctrine-centred understanding of religion – because they help us in unveiling the tacit dominance of Christianity (or more specifically Protestantism) permeating the understanding of religion in the UK and affecting the Leicester Jains' understanding of their own religion.

Firstly, the 'World Religions Paradigm' (WRP) is a phenomenon familiar to the academic study of religion and often explored in the field of Religious Studies. The understanding of religion (and particularly individual religious traditions) coloured

by a WRP conception of religion is implicitly derived from a Christian theological assumption that postulates a universal essence as the source of everyday religion and models its understanding of other such essences based on itself. To qualify as a world religion, a tradition must therefore in some sense be comparable to Christianity, either by possessing components that can be translated into Christian terms (such as God, scripture, prayer) or by mounting a strenuous enough challenge to Christianity (see Cotter and Robertson 2016, Cox 2007, Fitzgerald 2000, Masuzawa 2005). The WRP-infused discourse on religion would therefore present Jainism as a single, unchanging, and monolithic entity, where internal divisions and debates are less important (if mentioned at all), and the understanding of the tradition itself is modelled on the Christian tradition. Thus the Jain *agams* (authoritative religious texts) are equated with the status and role of the Bible, the *tirthankars* are seen as gods (with Mahavir often understood to be the main God), and Jainism as a whole seen as a single group, where individual Jains have identical beliefs and unchanging practices. While the WRP discourse on religion might not be reflected on by the Jains themselves, it certainly has a hold on the religious discourse employed by the English society permeating the conceptual environment of the Leicester Jains and finds its way into the Jains' understanding of religion through interpersonal interactions, school curricula, and narratives presented in the media (see Geaves 2005).

Furthermore, I would argue that the emergence of a doctrine-centred variation of Jainism among the youth in Leicester has correlations with the WRP's doctrine-centred understanding of religion moulded after the doctrine- and text-heavy British Protestantism (see Lopez 1998, 29-34). As the youth grew up encountering a particular narrative of religion (foregrounding Protestantism) in the general discourse, they conceivably began adopting its general contours and modelling their understanding of Jainism after it. Emphasising the understanding of Jain doctrines, rationalising them, rejecting traditional rituals, focusing on introspection, and even calling for a pan-Jain religious identity – all elements of the youth's Jainism that show parallels with the Protestant-heavy WRP-infused discourse on religion. An even clearer example of the Christian influence on Leicester Jainism are the Sunday *satsangs* described earlier in this chapter. The rescheduling of bigger celebrations to

Sundays, the general adoption of Sunday as a ‘religion day’, and the parallels that can be drawn between Sunday *satsangs* and the Sunday church services (see Yang and Ebaugh 2001, 277), could all be construed as expressions of the societal surroundings and the Christianity-infused discourse on religion that shapes the Leicester Jain community’s expressions of religious practice.

The Model of Societal Influence

The religious change we have been examining in this thesis has various causes and influences – as was already pointed out, not all of them are dependent upon the community in question, or put simply, might not be endogenous. While some changes may occur irrespective of the community’s environment, many do not. In this concluding section of the chapter I want to draw together all the endogenous and exogenous influences that impacted the Leicester Jain community and engendered change in their religious practice by proposing a model of societal influences on diasporic religious practice.

In *Chapter 2 (Leicester Jains as Diaspora)* I presented Kim Knott’s (1986) framework for mapping factors contributing to religious change in diasporic communities. She proposed five potential factors: *home traditions* (religious and cultural factors brought from the context of origin), *host traditions* (cultural, political, educational, etc. practices in the new environment, as well as ideas about the place of religion in society), *nature of migration process* (specifics of individuals’ or group’s migration histories), *nature of migrant group* (its size, geographical dispersion, and its division/cohesion), and *nature of host response* (general social attitudes, particularly regarding assimilation/integration, racism, inter-faith dialogue, and so on). It is clear that Knott focused more on a community’s internal characteristics – ‘home traditions,’ ‘nature of migration process,’ and ‘nature of migrant group’ are all factors that speak to the endogenous features of a diasporic community. Only ‘host traditions’ and ‘nature of host response’ indicate the myriad of external influences that impact a diasporic religious practice.

While my own examination in this chapter also followed Knott’s internal–external division of religious change (though not the five factors proposed), I want to

now propose my own model of religious change, which incorporates Knott's considerations, yet pays more attention to the sources of external/exogenous influence on a diasporic community and their religious practice. The below model of concentric circles is based on the Leicester Jain community and grew out of a close examination of the changes I observed during my fieldwork and the speculated causes for the occurrence of individual changes. As a consequence, it might therefore undergo a degree of transformation through its application to other communities in other contexts, but should nevertheless provide a good starting point for any examination of community-level religious change in general.

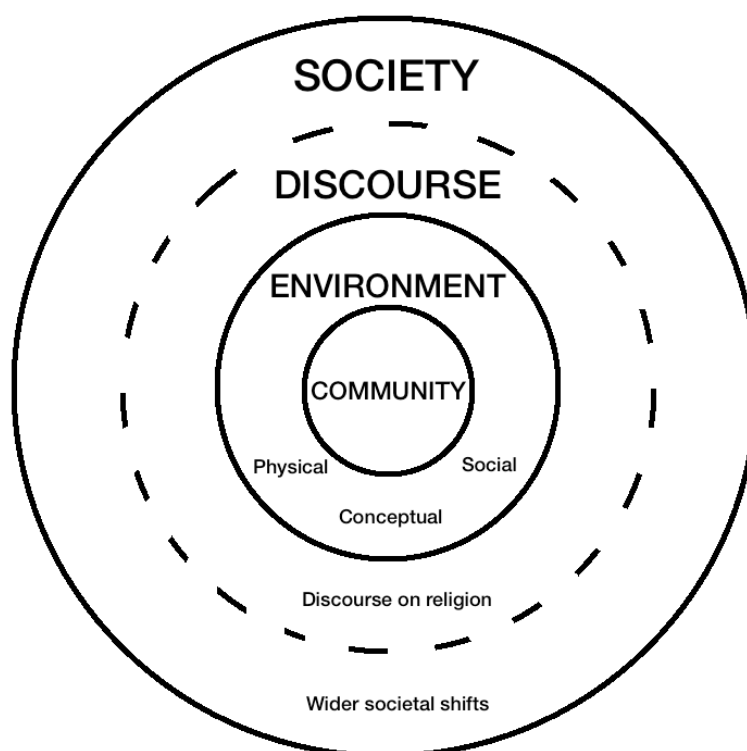


Image 35: Model of societal influences on diasporic religious practice (image by the author)

Layers of Societal Influence

In the proposed model there are four levels: the level of the community, its environment, the discourse on religion permeating the community's discursive environment, and the wider society and its shifts that influence all actors existing within it. While this model is obviously ideal-typical, as no clear lines between

individual levels can be drawn, its use is primarily in examining the interplay between different factors influencing religious expression within a community. The model intentionally excludes the level of the individual, as it is mostly concerned with broader shifts in religious practice at a community level and therefore takes the community as a whole as its starting point.

Community is therefore the level of the immediate group under examination. It comprises of individuals, who meet, know each other, and share a particular characteristic – in our case, that particular characteristic is the shared religious tradition of Jainism. It encompasses individuals, their migrational histories, behavioural patterns, and networks of connection, but extends to include organizational features of the community such as establishing and maintaining religious infrastructure, performance of community-desirable social functions, and the formation of an identity, which binds the community members together. It is the most immediate level of the influence model, as individuals within a community can easily identify most of its members, possessions, patterns of activity, and a unifying element shared by all.

At the level of the **environment** our focus expands to include the physical, social, and conceptual context in which the community finds itself. The *physical environment* is the most evident one. It encompasses the community's physical surroundings in the form of buildings, infrastructure, landscape, and climate – in our case, the urban and natural landscape of Leicester, combined with its weather and climate. The *social environment* of a community could generally be understood as the narrowest imagined community (see Anderson 2006 [1983]) in which they live – that is, the people living in Leicester. It comprises of people that members of the community might see, interact with, pass by, or form relationships with, but that are not a part of the community under examination. In addition to encompassing all the residents of Leicester, the social environment also includes their broad characteristics – their ethnic identities, language uses, religious affiliations, cultural backgrounds, and (un)familiarity with aspects of the community under study (or, more broadly, their general knowledge of the world). While the immediate social environment of the Leicester Jain community are the residents of Leicester, we could also adopt a slightly broader view and include people living in East Midlands, England, or the

UK as well, as they are present in Leicester Jains' lives through appearing in the media or as part of the regional/national imagined community. Lastly, the *conceptual environment* of our community branches out of the relatively concrete into the abstract. It involves patterns of thinking, perceiving, and communicating norms and values understood to be common to the broader society, including often unexamined behavioural patterns, political tendencies, and discursive systems. It acts as a bridge between the community under question and the discursive and societal layers further removed from it.

Discourse on religion is the next layer of the influence model we will examine. The particular discourse on religion in which members of a religious community exists is part of the broader discursive world that marks the use of language in a society – in our case, the discursive world of the English language as is used in England (and Britain). The English discourse on religion encompasses the ways religion is spoken and written about and – as a consequence – thought about. Yet it typically goes unnoticed and is unexamined, as it is adopted as 'normal' and 'the way things are'. Transmitted through regular speech, it shapes (and is shaped by) the speakers' understanding of religion, the elements comprising this broad category, the associations and connotations commonly attached to it, and the vocabulary used to express it. It is inculcated into the members of a particular society through regular speech and writing, transmitted through socialisation (in the home, at school, in other public spaces, though media, etc.), and reinforced in daily interactions with other members of the same society.

And lastly, ***wider societal shifts***. This layer encompasses the grand level of the society as the broadest imagined community typically based on regional or national identifications (e.g., English society). Societal characteristics determined by the place of residence of individuals and the community at hand include the nation's/locale's history, its political features, economic dimensions, social and cultural attributes, as well as the values and norms understood to be at the core of the society's self-ascribed identity.¹⁶¹ Elements of the wider society that shift – either due to internal innovation, external challenges, or migration of individuals forming

¹⁶¹ Think, for example, of the 'American dream' as shorthand for ideas of meritocracy, work ethos, and economic liberalism that are at the heart of the national self-image in the USA.

the community – trickle down the conceptual levels of influence and confront the community and its individual members requiring a response to the new circumstances.

It is also important to note that the boundaries between the conceptual environment, societal discourse on religion, and broader social trends are blurred and often overlapping. The layers are presented as separate in this theoretical model only for the sake of clarity, while in practice religious change is a much messier phenomenon with many different intertwining causes. The inherent indivisibility or even subsumption of the two outer layers of the model is explicitly represented by the perforated line between ‘discourse’ and ‘society.’ As communication and discourse cannot occur without being situated within a social framework, and a society cannot exist without implicit discourses dominating communication, the division between the layers of ‘discourse’ and ‘society’ is a purely theoretical one and only in place to facilitate our thinking about potential influences on religious practice. On the ground, the experience of a researcher attempting to untangle the social forces influencing religious practice in a community is a much more convoluted one.

Conclusion: Continuity Amidst the Change

After a lengthy discussion of religious change, it is vital that we again address its opposite – continuity. Change invariably presupposes continuities (similarities, resemblances, stability, unity) and that holds true for the Leicester Jain community as well. Without continuities we would not be able to recognise the religious practices of the community as Jain, let alone compare their individual elements to the non-diasporic Jain community of Jamnagar. While listing individual continuities would be futile, it might be fruitful to give an example to at least nominally counterbalance the discussion of change dominating this thesis.

The example I want to mention is that of ritual practice in the Leicester Jain community. Although the frequency of rituals preformed and the importance individuals ascribed to them changed (as was demonstrated most clearly in *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*), the form of the rituals themselves did not undergo

any drastic changes. The *samayiks* and *pratikramans* utilised the same Ardhamagadi and Gujarati verses as the ones set in Jamnagar (though they were affected by the absence of ascetics), the *puja* was guided by the same requirements of ritual purity, involved the same sequence of bodily motions, and was marked by the same proximity to the sacredness of the *murtis*. Even the songs of the evening *aartis* in the Leicester Jain Centre were set to the same melodies as the ones echoing through the warm air of Gujarati *derasars*.

Reflecting on the differences between diasporic and non-diasporic Jainisms encountered in Leicester and Jamnagar, I noticed that while the Leicester Jains showed a great variability in their doctrinal interpretations – a significant departure from the orthodoxy of Jamnagar Jains (as discussed in *Chapters 4 and 6*) – they were less likely to vary when it came to practice. It appeared that religion expressed through bodily actions such as movement, speech, or song was less likely to be influenced by external forces of change and more robust in transmission through the years and generations. Amidst the change of diasporic environments, doctrinal interpretation, and everyday impracticalities, there was the continuity of bodily motions that connected the practice of Jainism in India with the changes it was undergoing in England – establishing a link between the two worlds.

Which brings us back to the recipe that opened this chapter. Like the ‘Macaroni Indian Style’ that fused together the Mediterranean and Indian cuisines in a dish encapsulating cultural exchange and the blending of new flavours, so the practice of Jainism emerging in Leicester brings together elements of Indian religious practice with the influences from its English environment. Both the Macaroni Indian Style and the Leicester Jainism explored in this thesis display the inherent creativity of merging different elements into new forms, navigating between two cultural worlds, and finding one’s place within the spaces in between.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Vignette: Thirtieth Anniversary

The highlight of the three-day celebration, which involved *snatra pujas*, plays depicting Shanti-nath's life and a religion vs. science debate, plenty of singing, much laughter, and even some tears was a highly orchestrated affair. The floor sitting area was delineated with several velvet ropes, people were constantly ushered forward to make space for the bus-loads of Jains arriving from London, the microphones seamlessly travelled from one speaker to the next, and the singer-cum-hype man regularly broke into song and dance in between the bidding process that saw thousands of pounds being spent on *aarti*, *mangal divo*, and – the main event – the *dhaja bhadli*, or the changing of the flag (*dhaja*) adorning the top of a Jain *derasar*.

At precisely 12.39 pm on Sunday, 22nd July 2018, the elongated piece of red and white cloth adorned with golden and silver embroidery made its way around the *puja* station on the head of a fiery lady in her eighties that paid over £30,000 for the honour to carry it to the Jain Centre's roof. The *dhaja bhadli* epitomised the celebrations of the thirtieth anniversary of the Leicester Jain Centre's *pratishtha*, or consecration ceremony, and brought around five hundred people to the Centre's outer temple.



Image 36: Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Jain Centre (image by the author)

My position in the third row afforded me a great view of the *puja* happening at the front and when the time came for the select few to climb the stairs to the building's roof, everyone's eyes (and quite a few phones) turned to the screen that live-streamed the happenings about twelve feet above us. Surrounded by Jayeshbhai, Hiteshbhai, and a handful of friends, the lady took down the old *dhaja*, washed the flag rod with milk and water, and spread the golden sandalwood paste on it before sliding on the vibrant colours of the new *dhaja*, adorning it with flowers, and hoisting it to the top of the temple.



Image 37: *Dhaja bhadli* (image by the author)

Accompanied with singing from the rest of the gathered crowd, the installation of the new *dhaja* marked the culmination of a year-long string of events celebrating the “pearl jubilee” of the Jain Centre and the Leicester Jain community’s success in establishing a place of worship that not only survived, but arguably thrived in this East Midlands city. In a town full of bricks, the Jains successfully added their own piece of marble to the diverse puzzle making up its religious landscape.

* * *

My visit to the Leicester Jain Centre for the thirtieth anniversary of the Centre’s consecration represented the ending of my time researching religious change in the Leicester Jain community. Likewise, this concluding chapter signals the imminent ending of my thesis. As such it is a fitting point for some reflections – reflections on the past and on the future of Leicester Jainism. While ethnographic and analytic reflections have been weaved throughout the thesis, and the previous chapter (*Diasporic Reverberations*) served in part as a conclusion to that examination, these last few pages will reflect mostly on the content as a whole, its connections, and contributions.

Thirty Years On: From Banks to Pogačnik

My fieldwork in Leicester and Jamnagar in 2015 and 2016 stood on many a scholars' shoulders, but none more than the work conducted by Marcus Banks over thirty years before me, in 1982 and 1983. Without his monograph *Organising Jainism in India and England* (Banks 1992) I might have never stepped on the path of researching religious change in the Leicester Jain community and would definitely not have gone into the field with as much prior knowledge as I did. Without Banks's work it would also be much more difficult to reflect on the community's religious and social past and situate present developments within the broader framework of change. I believe valuable insight can be gained from looking into the past to better understand the future of the Leicester Jain community and thus I will provide a brief reflection on Leicester Jainism's past, present, and future.

Throughout this thesis I have referred back to Banks's work – when describing the Leicester Jain community in *Chapter 1 (Introduction)*, when analysing the styles of Jain practice among the younger and older generations of Leicester Jains in *Chapter 4 (Intergenerational Innovation)*, and when reflecting on the internal and external causes of religious changes in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*. Tracing lineages and divergences between his work and mine offered a sense of chronological development within the Leicester Jain community, one that outlined the community's maturation and consolidation. The community of recent 'twice migrants' from the 1980s developed into a diasporic community marked by a tripartite generational structure in the mid 2010s; the 'orthodox'–'heterodox'–'neo-orthodox' belief tendencies of Banks's time evolved into the 'religious' and 'spiritual' Jainism of my fieldwork; the recently bought building on Oxford Street blossomed into a Leicester Jain Centre; and the *jati* delineations and identities that played a big role in early 1980s lost much of their importance three decades later.

Yet Leicester Jainism has not finished changing and evolving. We can expect the descriptions of Jain practice from this thesis to no longer describe the realities of Leicester Jainism in thirty years' time, as the community will have moved on and the Jainism they practiced changed even further than it has since the times of Banks's fieldwork until now. But what might our knowledge of Leicester Jainism's past and present tell us about its possible future? While we will have to wait for future

research to give us definitive answers, I would like to offer a handful of speculations as to the direction of Leicester Jainism's future developments. I expect that the tripartite generational structure (explored in *Chapter 3: Historical Trajectory*) will gradually become consolidated and that the generational boundaries will shift and become more blurred in the coming years and decades. While I would also envisage the further blending of 'religious' and 'spiritual' Jainisms (see *Chapter 4: Intergenerational Innovation*) into a new and even more distinct version of diasporic Jainism, I would also predict the continuation of the community-wide move towards more Derawasi-infused Jain practice (see *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*), although not requiring a complete disappearance of non-Derawasi branches of Jainism from the community. Furthermore, I anticipate the gradual disappearance of strict dietary compliance among the Leicester Jains (see *Chapter 5: Transforming the Everyday*), though the role of the Leicester Jain Centre – and the absent nature of the Leicester Jains' relationship with Jain ascetics in India – will likely continue functioning as it has at the time of my fieldwork. Although these predictions are based on my familiarity and knowledge of Leicester Jainism's past and present, I will limit my predictions to these few suggestions of potential future developments, as prophesising the future is always a risky endeavour. Instead, let us turn back to the thesis at hand.

A Question and Some Answers

My examination of the Leicester Jain community started with a relatively simple question: how has the practice of Jainism changed in Leicester as a consequence of migration and life in diaspora? This thesis chose to address the question by examining a few focal points – migration history of the community, the experience and religious innovation of Leicester Jain youth, the mundane examples of adaptation to a new social environment, the changes that become apparent through a contrasting with non-diasporic religious practice, and the potential reasons for the highlighted changes – all with the aim of painting a picture of religious practice and change in the Leicester Jain community. The painting, however, is one of an impressionist variety. Each chapter, each section, even each paragraph painted a

detailed study of an aspect of Leicester Jainism that plays a part in our understanding of religious change. Now we must step back, tilt our heads sideways, and squint a little to glimpse at the outlines of the complexity that religious change really is. Studying change – something unstable, in flux, and always on the move – is an unending endeavour that could only be glanced at by freezing it in time for a brief moment and studying its shapes and contours in stasis. While this thesis has done just that, it does not claim to explain religious change in general – but simply to add an impressionist painting to the mosaic of academic scholarship.

The thesis – even in its impressionist state – contributes to three major academic mosaics: to the fields of Jain Studies, Diaspora Studies, and Religious Studies. By focusing on a particular community of Jains, the research presented in this thesis contributes to our understanding of contemporary Jainism as it is practiced outside of India, expands our knowledge of the Leicester (and more broadly English) Jain community, and provides additional information about the Jains of Jamnagar. As the field of Jain Studies is an impoverished one, with only a few dozen scholars working on aspects of the tradition and mostly publishing research on its textual, historical, or (rarely) contemporary Indian dimensions, this thesis is a timely addition to the field's corpus that foregrounds a contemporary diasporic Jain community and their practice of Jainism.

To the field of Diaspora Studies (or more specifically its sub-field, Religion and Migration) this thesis contributes an example of a small and often overlooked religious tradition, a community of twice migrants. By examining instances of religious change and the factors impacting religious practice in a diasporic environment, it sheds a light on how a religious community changes through the process of migration and across generations, and takes a fresh look at change that arises out of migration. To the field of Diaspora and Migration Studies this thesis also makes its biggest analytical contribution, that is, the model of societal influences on religious practice (and change) developed in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*. Utilising and enhancing the model through future applications to other diasporic communities, the analytical contribution of this thesis should prove useful to other researchers examining case studies of religious change, and the

further improvement of our understanding and conceptualisation of religious change in diaspora.

The model, of course, is also a contribution to the field of Religious Studies. Examining elements of lived religious experience, postulating on factors contributing to change in religious practice, and exploring a fragment of the English religious landscape (the religiosity in South Asian diaspora in particular) are a few of the other contributions this thesis aims to make to the field of Religious Studies. In addition to providing a Religious Studies interrogation of an often overlooked religious tradition (i.e., Jainism), the thesis also expanded on the conceptualisation of ‘spirituality’ and the ‘subjective turn’ by providing an example outside the holistic milieu of alternative spiritualities. By presenting a case study of ‘religious’ and ‘spiritual’ elements coexisting in the same community, and the ‘subjective turn’ manifesting itself alongside a more traditional practice of Jainism, the thesis brought a novel example to the analytical table of Religious Studies.

Yet despite these broader contributions, there is a considerable hindrance to the applicability of at least some of my conclusions: the change in religious leadership that occurred almost concurrently with the end of my fieldwork in autumn 2016 meant that tectonic changes were already happening in the community before I even fully delved into the analysis of the gathered data. As was discussed in *Chapter 7 (Diasporic Reverberations)*, Jayeshbhai – a religious leader that served the community for fifteen years – left Leicester for the Oswal *derasar* in London, and Hiteshbhai, a somewhat shyer man, took his place. Since the worship and transmission of religious knowledge in the Leicester Jain Centre was heavily influenced by Jayeshbhai’s presence (and, to a certain extent, his charisma), it is bound to change – if ever so slightly – under the leadership of Hiteshbhai. Yet such an examination is already outside the remit of my project and will therefore have to wait for future scholars.

I conclude this thesis with the hope that other researchers *will* look at the material gathered and find the Leicester Jain community a topic worthy of further examination. The chapters in this thesis and the emphases presented in them are only a small selection of all the possible topics one could address in relation to both the Leicester Jains and the elements of religious change within it. With the aspiration

that the academic community will not have to wait another thirty years for the next study of the Leicester Jains, I offer an assortment of potential questions that could take the research I have conducted on the topic of religious change further and into new directions.

- How has the change in religious leadership (from Jayeshbhai to Hiteshbhai) affected religious practice in the Leicester Jain Centre?
- What are the lineages of administrative power in the Executive Committee of the Leicester Jain Centre and how do they shape the direction in which the Centre is developing?
- What is the family structure of the Leicester Jain community – who is related to whom and what is the history of family affiliations by power holders in the community? What are the relationships between individuals and wider families of the Shahs and the Mehtas in the Leicester Jain community?
- What is the role of language in the Leicester Jain community and particularly among its youth? What are the particular social, generational, familial, or personal patterns of how English and Gujarati are used among Leicester Jains?
- How do Leicester Jains interact with other religious communities in the city both in the official capacity of the Leicester Jain Centre and individually through social contacts? Does inter-religious interaction shape their understanding of Jainism and in what ways?
- What are the specific avenues through which societal trends and forces influence individual Leicester Jains? How do they themselves perceive the wider society to be shaping their religious interpretations and practices?

It would, of course, be interesting to conduct a similar study of religious change in Leicester Jain practice in ten or twenty years, when the youth of my fieldwork have grown up and started taking positions within the Jain Centre's administrative and leadership structure. Will the elements of the youth's Jainism (explored in *Chapter 4*) be adapted into the institutional practice of the Leicester Jain Centre (such as structuring religious activities, events, or even the religious calendar around

some of their principles)? Will they be rejected (with the consequential dwindling of community numbers attending the Jain Centre) and the community thus segregated into distinct sub-groups? Will they be appropriated into a different form of Leicester Jainism altogether? Or will the youth grow up to follow a more ‘religious’ Jainism presently practiced by the older generation of the Leicester Jains? We will have to wait for the next study for those questions to be answered.

Times, They are A-Changing

*Come writers and critics, who prophesize with your pen.
And keep your eyes wide, the chance won't come again,
And don't speak too soon, for the wheel's still in spin,
And there's no telling who that it's naming.
For the loser now will be later to win,
For the times, they are a-changing.
(Bob Dylan)*

Just as Bob Dylan sang in his famous lyrics about social transitions, times are changing for the Leicester Jain community as well. In this thesis I have painted a picture of religious practice in a single moment in time, offered a range of explanations for the religious changes encountered, and ventured a few predictions of potential future developments. I have ‘prophesised with my pen’ and – on the topic of religious change – quite likely ‘spoke too soon.’ For Dylan is right, the ‘wheel is still in spin’ and Leicester Jainism is changing as I write these very words. Many of the observations I have made will soon be out-dated and the analysis undertaken on these pages will likely need addendums and expansions. It is impossible to expect solidity from a work that examines a fluid process, an unfolding that is continuously in flux. Yet the metaphorical wheel will never stop spinning (at least while there are Jains living in Leicester) and therefore an examination of a brief moment in its whirl, a single rotation of its spokes is all that one can hope for in these times, that are a-changing.

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Glossary

The terms in this glossary are provided in the spelling most typically adopted by the Leicester Jains. They are generally in Gujarati with the Gujarati transliteration given in brackets, except when the word used by the Leicester Jains is not of Gujarati origin, in which case the transliteration of the original Sanskrit or Ardhamāgadhī is given in parentheses. These transliterations are provided for the ease of the readers to potentially consult literature in Gujarati script or scholarly literature on Jainism, which typically adopts Sanskrit or Ardhamāgadhī spellings. The Glossary follows the English alphabetical order.

The construction of the glossary aided by the following literature:

Banks, Marcus. 1992. *Organising Jainism in India and England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Dundas, Paul. 2002. *The Jains, Second Edition*. London: Routledge.

Wiley, Kirsti L. 2014. *The A-to-Z of Jainism*. New Delhi: Vision Books / Scarecrow Press.

AARTI (ĀRATĪ) = an act of worship, a ritualistic offering of light (in the form of small ghee candles (**divo**) on a five-pronged candleholder) to the images of **tirthankars**, other **jinās**, and sometimes additional important figures, typically followed by **mangal divo**.

ABHAKṢYA = lit. not to be eaten, food items proscribed by Jain doctrine typically enumerated in lists.

ADI (ĀDĪ) = lit. ‘first lord’, the first **tirthankar** of the twenty-four, also known as **Rushabh**.

AGAM (ĀGAMA) = Jain sacred/canonical texts, often translated as ‘scripture’ or ‘canon’.

AHIMSA (AHIMŚĀ) = non-violence or non-harming, the central moral principle of Jainism, which encompasses abstaining from

harm/violence with one's body, speech, and mind, as well as from inducing others or approving of others' harmful behaviours.

ANANTA-KĀYA = a special category of plants, which are inhabited by an infinite number of living beings and thus doctrinally prohibited for consumption (e.g., root vegetables).

ANEKANTAVADA (**ANEKĀNTAVĀDA**) = doctrine of non-one-sidedness, many-pointedness, non-dogmatism, or a multifaceted view of reality. One of 'the three As of Jainism' (alongside **ahimsa** and **aparigraha**).

ANGI (**ĀṆGĪ**) = the adornment of **tirthankar** images (sometimes also **murtis** of deities) with silver armours, colourful ornaments, and/or special clothing.

APARIGRAHA = non-possession (can also mean asceticism), often interpreted as the minimisation of one's individual possessions and the minimisation of one's attachment to those possessions and the material things in general.

ARIHANT (**ARIHAMTA**) = also *arhat*, lit. one who is worthy of worship, a synonym for a **jina** or a **tirthankar**, the first of the five salutations in the **navkar mantra**.

ASCETIC = a Jain who has renounced the householder's life and taken vows of non-violence, non-possession, austerity, and continuous wandering in a **diksha** ceremony; also called a nun or a monk. See **sadhu/sadhvi**.

ATTHAY (**AṬṬHĀĪ**) = a type of fasting, where one does not eat food for eight consecutive days (drinking water is allowed), typically performed around **Paryushan**. See **tap**.

AYAMBIL (**ĀYAMBĪL**) = a type of fasting composed of eating one meal of bland food a day. The food is prepared without oil, ghee, sugar, salt, or spices and does not contain fresh or green vegetables or fruits. Among laity it is typically undertaken during nine-day periods of **Oḷī** taking place twice a year. See **tap**.

BAHUBALI (**BĀHUBALI**) = the second son of **Adi** or **Rushabh**, who

renounced household life and stood in meditation for so long that creepers entwined his limbs until he attained omniscience (**kevalgnan**).

BANDH = a voluntary vow or pledge to restrict one's non-religious activity, be particularly diligent in regular religious activity, or practice some additional religious activity.

BEASHANA (BEĀSANA) = a type of fasting composed of eating two meals a day (drinking water is allowed). See **tap**.

BHAGWAN (BHAGAVĀN) = the venerable, typically translated as 'god' by Leicester Jains and used to refer to **tirthankars** or as a reverential suffix added to their names.

BHAKTI = religious devotion, activities expressing devotion towards the **tirthankars** and other **jinas**, e.g., singing **stavans**, reciting **mantras** with the help of a **mala**, etc.

BHAV (BHĀVA) = a state of being, intentions and feelings of devotion, especially during the performance of a ritual.

BHOJANSHALA (BHOJANŚĀLĀ) = a hall for eating, a free or discounted canteen following all Jain dietary regulations.

CHATURMAS (CĀTURMĀSA) = the four-month rainy season period, when **ascetics** cease their traveling and stay in the same place, holding daily **pravachans** or **vyakhyans**, occasional **shibirs**, and regular **pratikramans**.

DARSHAN (DARŚANA) = the ritual of reverential viewing or 'beholding' the images of **tirthankars**, **jinas**, **devs/devis**, or Jain **ascetics**. Also refers to perception or awareness (as one of the three jewels of Jainism [see **ratnatraya**]) and philosophical schools of thought.

DAS LAKSHAN (DAŚA LAKṢAṆA PARVAN) = festival of ten virtues (i.e., forgiveness, humility, honesty, purity, truthfulness, self-restraint, asceticism, study, detachment, and celibacy), typically celebrated in August/September of the Gregorian calendar, lasting for ten days. It is the most important event in the **Digambar** ritual calendar. See also

Paryushan of the **Shwetambar** tradition.

DERASAR (DERĀSAR) = a worship space of the **Derawasi** branch, a Jain temple housing consecrated **murtis** of **tirthankars** on which **puja** can be performed, as well as images of other important Jain figures.

DERAWASI (DERĀVĀSĪ) = lit. dwelling (*vāsī*) in a **derasar**, a prevalent term for image-worshipping or **murtipujak** branch of **Shwetambar** Jainism.

DEV/DEVI (DEVĀ/DEVĪ) = god/goddess or heavenly being; one of four states of existence in the Jain cycle of rebirth (the other three being *manuṣya* [humans], *nāraki* [hellish beings], and *tiryāṇca* [non-human animals]); also used as a reverential suffix (e.g., *Sarasvati-devi*, **guru-dev**).

DHAJA (DHAJĀ) = an elongated red-and-white-striped flag decorated with embroidered symbols adorning the top of Jain **derasars**.

DHAJA BHADLI (DHAJĀ BHADLĪ) = the event celebrating the

anniversary of a **derasar**'s consecration (see **pratishtha**) during which its **dhaja** is changed.

DHARAMSHALA

(DHARMAŚĀLĀ) = a rest house, typically for religious pilgrims, a modest hotel for traveling lay Jains.

DHARMA = commonly used as an Indic equivalent to the English word 'religion'; also religious duty, law.

DIGAMBAR (DIGAMBARA) = one of the two main branches of Jainism (the other being **Shwetambar**) characterised by naked wandering male **ascetics**, who give the tradition its name – sky-clad.

DIKSHA (DĪKṢĀ) = religious initiation into mendicancy, during which a layperson renounces their material possessions, personal relations, and other societal ties to become a Jain **ascetic**. See **sadhu/sadhvi**.

DIVO (DĪVO) = referring either to a small ghee candle, or a ritual following **aarti** called **mangal divo**.

DIWALI (DĪVĀLĪ) = pan-Indian festival of lights typically occurring in October of the Gregorian calendar; for Jains it commemorates the death (or reaching of **moksh**) of **Mahavir**, the last **tirthankar**, and the attainment of **kevalgnan** of his chief disciple Gautama. Celebrated by reciting **mantras** and offering **divas** to **murtis**.

EKASHANA (EKĀSANA) = a type of fasting where a single meal is consumed in a day. See **tap**.

GACCHA = monastic order or lineage of **ascetics** in the **Derawasi** tradition. Major lineages are Tapā Gaccha, A(ñ)cala Gaccha, and Kharatara Gaccha.

GARBHA-GRIHA (GARBHA-GRĪHA) = the inner sanctum of a **derasar**, where the consecrated **murtis** of **tirthankars** are housed.

GNAN MANDIR (GYAN/JÑĀN MANDIR) = a worship space devoted to knowledge and its teachers. Can refer to a **Shrimad Rajchandra** worship space, or a space dedicated to important Jain figures and/or influential deceased **ascetics**.

GURU = a religious teacher, also referred to with the reverential suffix ‘*guru-dev*’.

GURU MANDIR (GURU MANDIR) = a worship space dedicated to an influential (typically deceased) **ascetic** and **guru**.

JATI (JĀTI) = a South Asian system of hierarchically ranked local endogamous social groups fixed by birth, commonly translated as caste or sub-caste. Most Leicester Jains are either Shrimalis (Visā Śrīmālī) or Oswals (Hālāri Visā Osvāl).

JINA = spiritual victor, a human being who attained omniscience (**kevalgnan**) through their own efforts and taught others the Jain path to **moksh**. Followers of *jinas* are called Jains. A synonym for **siddha** and **tirthankar**.

JINALAY (JINĀLAYA) = the house, residence, or seat of **jinas**; used to refer to the structure housing **Digambar murtis** in the Leicester Jain Centre.

JIV (JĪVA) = the soul, self, also life-monad. Characterised by qualities of awareness or consciousness, energy, and bliss, *jiv* is eternal and unchanging, yet defiled by **karma** and thus kept in the realm of **samsar**.

KALYANAK (KALYĀṆAKA) = one of five auspicious moments in the life of a **tirthankar** (i.e., conception, birth, renunciation [**diksha**], enlightenment [**kevalgnan**], and liberation [**moksh**]). Celebrated on a yearly basis for each **tirthankar** individually.

KANJI-SWAMI (KĀNJĪ SVĀMĪ) = Jain reformer who lived between 1889 and 1980, the founder of the neo-**Digambar** Kanji-swami *Panth* (sectarian movement). There is a group of his followers living in Jamnagar.

KARMA = minute particles of matter that cling to a **jiv** whenever its actions are motivated by passions keeping it in the realm of **samsar**.

KEVALGNAN (KEVALA-JÑĀNA) = omniscience, the attainment of perfect, absolute knowledge. Also

referring to one of the five **kalyanaks** of a **tirthankar**.

KRIYA (KRIYĀ) = lit. action, process, religious ceremony, practice, or a method of doing something.

KSHAMAPNA (KṢAMĀPANĀ) = lit. asking for pardon, a recitation of asking for forgiveness typically performed in communal settings, like at the end of the evening **aarti** trail in the Leicester Jain Centre.

MADHYA-LOKKA = the middle realm, the part of the Jain universe where animals and humans reside.

MAHAVIR (MAHĀVĪRA) = lit. 'Great Hero', an honorific title for the twenty-fourth and last **tirthankar** of the present era, who lived in the sixth or fifth century BCE and is considered to be one of the most important figures in Jain history.

MALA (MĀLĀ) = a string of (typically 108) prayer beads used for keeping count when reciting, chanting, or repeating a particular **mantra** (an activity called *jap* [*japa*]).

MANDIR = a place of worship, a name primarily used by **Digambar** Jains.

MANGAL DIVO (MAṄGAḶA DĪVO) = a ritual typically following **aarti** in which a single **divo** (and sometimes a piece of camphor) is offered to **tirthankars**, **jinas**, or other important Jain figures by circling it clock-wise on a metal plate in front of their images.

MANTRA = a sound, word, or phrase charged with special powers, usually used by Jains to describe ‘short prayers’ like the **navkar mantra**.

MOKSH (MOKṢA) = liberation of the soul (**jiv**) from embodiment in the cycle of rebirth (**samsar**) and its ascent to the **siddhi-silla**.

MUHPATTI (MUHPATTĪ) = a small piece of (typically) white cloth placed in front of the mouth. Used when interacting with a **murti**, reciting sacred texts, and worn permanently by **ascetics** of the **Sthanakvasi** branch.

MUNI = lit. silent one, typically used when referring to a male **ascetic** of the **Digambar** tradition.

MURTI (MŪRTI) = an image (typically a statue) of a **tirthankar**, **dev/devi**, or other influential Jain figures. On consecrated *murtis* of **tirthankars** rituals of worship can be performed (see **puja**). Used in **Shwetambar** and **Digambar** traditions, but not by **Sthanakvasis**.

MURTIPUJAK (MŪRTIPŪJAKA) = Jain traditions engaging in worship of images (see **murtis**), typically referring to **Derawasi** Jainism, but can also include **Digambar** Jains.

NAVKAṢ MANTRA (NAMASKĀRA MANTRA) = an ancient **mantra** of homage to five categories of living beings that are worthy of worship (i.e., **arihants**, **siddhas**, ascetic leaders, religious teachers, and all **ascetics**). Seen as the most fundamental **mantra** of Jainism.

NEMI (NEMI) = the twenty-second **tirthankar**, believed to be the cousin of Krishna (Kṛṣṇa), a prominent Hindu deity.

PADMAVATI (PADMĀVATĪ) = an attendant goddess (or *yakṣī*) associated with **Parshwa**, and a popular **devi** in Jain devotional practice.

PANDIT (PAṆḌITA) = lit. learned one, a term used by **Kanji-swami** Jains of Jamnagar to refer to a lay ritual specialist.

PARSHVA (PĀRŚVA) = the twenty-third **tirthankar**, who is believed to have lived in the tenth or ninth century BCE. See also **Padmavati**.

PARYUSHAN (PARYUṢAṆA) = an eight-day festival performed in the middle of the rainy season (typically August or September of the Gregorian calendar), honouring penance, forgiveness, and restraint, during which many Jains perform complex fasts or other acts of austerity, engage in frequent religious activities, and ask for forgiveness. It is the most important event in the **Shwetambar** ritual calendar. See also **Das Lakshan** of the **Digambar** tradition.

PATHSHALA (PĀṬHŚĀLĀ) = children's religious education. Can

also refer to a room or building used for such purposes.

PRATIKRAMAN

(PRATIKRAMAṆA) = ritualised repentance for faults that one has committed or for infractions of one's vows. Most often performed during **Paryushan** or **chaturmas**, though it is performed twice daily by **ascetics** and more religious laypeople.

PRATISHTHA (PRATIṢṬHĀ) = the ceremony during which a **derasar** is consecrated. Its anniversary is celebrated with a **dhaja bhadli**.

PRAVACHAN (PRAVACANA) = a religious discourse (or lecture) given by Jain **ascetics** (or knowledgeable laypeople). Also **vyakhyan**.

PUJA (PŪJĀ) = ritual acts of worship. Typically used to refer to *aṅga puja* during which specific points on a **murti** of a **tirthankar** are anointed with sandalwood paste. Can also refer to *dravya puja* (external worship of images, where various substances are offered in front of the **murti**), *bhāva puja* (mental worship, including meditative practices, **mala**,

bhakti, signing of **stavans**, or **samayik**), or **snatra puja** (a ritual recreation of the first bath given to infant **tirthankars** by deities).

PUJARI (PUJĀRĪ) = a ritual assistant employed by a **derasar**. Responsible for preparing ingredients for worship (see **puja**), decorating and cleaning the **murtis**, cleaning the temple precinct, and occasionally performing daily worship of consecrated images of **tirthankars**, if no lay Jains are able to do so. In the Leicester Jain Centre the *pujari* also occasionally helps with the guiding of specific rituals (e.g., **snatra pujas** or **aartis**) and prepares food for communal meals after bigger events.

RAKESH ZAVERI (RĀKEŚ JHAVERĪ) = the founder and spiritual leader of the **Shrimad Rajchandra Mission** (Dharampur).

RATNATRAYA = the three jewels or gems of Jainism: right view/faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.

RĀTRI-BHOJANA = food eaten after sunset, proscribed for Jains because it might lead to inadvertent

harm to living beings either through consumption or carelessness.

RUSHABH (RṢABHA) = the first **tirthankar** of the twenty-four, also known as **Adi**.

SADHU/SADHVI (SĀDHU/SĀDHVĪ) = lit. virtuous man/woman, one who has accomplished his/her goals. A general term for male/female **ascetics** in the **Shwetambar** tradition. For *sadhvi* also used with the reverential suffix ‘*sadhvi-ji*’. Can also be translated as monk/nun.

SAMAYIK (SĀMĀYIKA) = a forty-eight-minute-long ritual during which a layperson temporarily adopts **ascetic** vows. Bookended by the recitation of particular verses, it can be spent singing **stavans**, chanting **mantras**, listening to a **vyakhyān** or **pravachan**, reciting **sutras**, or otherwise engaging in religious learning and devotion (see **bhakti**) with the intention of attaining equanimity and detachment from external objects.

SAMSAR (SAṂSĀRA) = the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which a **jiv** is captured until it sheds all **karma** and achieves liberation (**moksh**). Also worldly life.

SATSANG (SANTSANG) = lit. a gathering of truth, an association with people seeking the truth, a true community. In the case of Leicester Jains it refers to monthly meetings, which are intended to bring the entire community together in worship.

SEVA (SEVĀ) = selfless service, charitable work, volunteering.

SHANTI (ŚĀNTI) = the sixteenth **tirthankar** and the main **murti** of the Leicester Jain Centre.

SHIBIR (ŚIBIR) = a retreat, an event organised by Jain **ascetics** lasting for several days and focusing on adult religious education.

SHRAVAK/SHRAVIKA
(ŚRĀVAKA/ŚRĀVIKĀ) = a lay man or lay woman, sometimes with the connotation of being very religious. Two of the four categories composing

the Jain society (the other being **sadhus/sadhvis**).

SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA
(ŚRĪMAD RĀJACĀMDRA) = Jain mystic and reformer (1867-1901), who emphasised the attainment of knowledge and experience of the purity of **jiv** through meditation, rejected sectarianism, and de-emphasised the importance of rituals. See **Rakesh Zaveri**.

SHWETAMBAR (ŚVETĀMBARA)
= one of the two main branches of Jainism (the other being **Digambar**) characterised by **ascetics** wearing simple white garments, giving the tradition its name – white-clad. It is divided into three branches – **Derawasis** or **murtipujaks**, who engage in image-worship, **Sthanakvasis**, and Terāpanthīs (not present in Leicester), who reject the efficacy of image worship.

SIDDHA = lit. one who has accomplished their goals. Any **jiv** that has achieved **moksh** and now resides in **siddhi-silla**. A synonym for **jina** and **tirthankar**.

SIDDHI-SILLA (SIDDHA-ŚILĀ) = the crescent-shaped abode of disembodied liberated souls (**siddhas**) located at the top of the Jain universe.

SNATRA PUJA (SNĀTRA PŪJĀ) = an act of worship, which ritually recreates the first bath given to infant **tirthankars** by deities. See **puja**.

STAVAN = Jain hymn or devotional song addressed to a **tirthankar**.

STHANAK (STHĀNAKA) = gender-segregated dwelling halls for **ascetics** that are not part of a temple complex (see **derasar**) and are used for **Sthanakvasi ascetics**. Also referred to as **upashray**.

STHANAKVASI (STHĀNAKAVĀSĪ) = a non-image-worshipping branch of **Shwetambar** Jainism, whose name is derived from the independent dwelling-halls (**sthanaks**) used by their **ascetics**.

STOTRA = a text composed for melodic recitation. See also **stuti** and **sutra**.

STUTI = textual devotional compositions. See also **stotra** and **sutra**.

SUTRA (SŪTRA) = religious discourse, scripture, or versed text. See **agam**. See also **stotra** and **stuti**.

SWASTIK (SVASTIKA) = one of the eight auspicious symbols of Jainism (*aṣṭamaṅgala*) representing the four states of existence in the cycle of rebirth (i.e., human [*manuṣya*], animals [*tiryāṅca*], heavenly beings [**dev/devi**], and hellish beings [*nārakī*]) as well as the four-fold Jain community (**sadhu/sadvi** and **shravak/shravika**). Most often used in the performance of *dravya puja* and other image-worshipping rituals, or as a symbol displayed at home or on one's person.

TAP (TAPAS) = an act of austerity, asceticism, or self-discipline that is though to produce heat (*tapas*) that burns away accumulated **karma**. Often referring to a fast (see **atthay**, **ayambil**, **beashana**, **ekashana**, **upvas**, **varsitap**).

TIRTHANKAR (TĪRTHAṆKARA)

= ford-maker; one of twenty-four human beings, who attained omniscience and taught the Jain path to liberation (**moksh**) through non-violence (**ahimsa**) and asceticism, thus establishing a ford (*tīrtha*) across the waters of rebirth (**samsar**). The *tirthankars* of the current era are: 1. **Ādi/Rṣabha**, 2. Ajita, 3. Saṃbhava, 4. Abhinanda, 5. Sumati, 6. Padmaprabha, 7. Supārśva, 8. Candraprabha, 9. Puṣpadanta/Suvidhi, 10. Śītala, 11. Śreyamśa, 12. Vāsupūjya, 13. Vimala, 14. Ananta, 15. Dharma, 16. **Śānti**, 17. Kunthu, 18. Ara, 19. Malli, 20. Munisuvrata, 21. Nami, 22. **Nemi**, 23. **Pārśva**, 24. **Mahāvīra**. See **jina** and **siddha**.

TITHI = auspicious day of the lunar calendar; particularly important are the fifth, eighth, and sixteenth days. Dietary (or other behavioural) restrictions are typically observed.

UPASHRAY (UPĀŚRAYA) = a gender-segregated dwelling-hall (often located near a temple [see **derasar**]) where Jain **ascetics** stay for shorter periods of time or for the four-month

rainy season (**chaturmas**). The space is also used for ascetics giving **pravachans** or **vyakhyans** to laity, and for laypeople performing major penances (see **tap**), such as temporary adoptions of **ascetic** lifestyle. **Sthanakvasi** Jains also refer to *upashrays* as **sthanaks**.

UPVAS (UPAVĀSA) = a type of fasting, where one abstains from food for a day (water is allowed, though can also be abstained from). Can be performed individually or as part of a longer or more complex fast (like **atthay** or **varsitap**). See **tap**.

VARŠITAP (VARṢĪ TAPAS) = a type of fasting, where a day of complete fasting (**upvas**) is alternated with a day of eating a single meal a day (**ekashana**) for a year in remembrance of a fast performed by the first **tirthankar** **Adi/Rushabh**. See **tap**.

VYAKHYAN (VYĀKHYĀNA) = a religious discourse (or lecture) given by Jain **ascetics** (or knowledgeable laypeople). Also **pravachan**.

Appendix 1

Question Guides

Question Guide: Individual Interviews

Life questions: who are you and what is your story?

- What year were you born? Where were you born?
- Tell me about your childhood?
 - What did your parents do? Do you have any siblings? What do they do?
 - How do you remember Jainism practiced when you were young?
 - What did you study?
 - Do you now work? What do you do? Have you always done that?
- When did you move to Leicester?
 - What was the main reason you moved to the UK? Why Leicester in particular?
 - What was it like for you when you first came to Leicester?
 - Did you observe any differences between India/East Africa and England? What kind? Do you think those things are still different now?
 - What are some of the things in your life that have changed since you moved to Leicester?
 - Do you think your understanding and practice of Jainism has changed since you moved to Leicester as well?
 - Would you want to move back to India at some point in the future? Why not? / Why yes? When would you want to do that?
- Are you married?
 - Is your spouse also a Jain? The same branch of Jainism?
 - Do you and your spouse understand religious teachings in the same way or differently?
 - Do you have children? How old are their? What do they study/do?
 - Do you think the way your children interpret and practice Jainism is different from how you do? In what ways?

Introductory religious questions

- What does it mean to be Jain to you?
 - Is being a Jain important to you?
 - What parts of your life would be different if you were not a Jain?
- What is the most important aspect of Jainism to you?
 - How do you implement this in your daily life?

- What is the most important Jain ritual? Why? How often do you do it?
 - What is the ritual you do the most often?
- Is it difficult to be a Jain in England? Why (not)?
- What branch of Jainism would you identify with?

Change

- Do you think Jainism is practiced differently in Leicester than in India? In what ways?
 - Why do you think that is? What are the different influences in Leicester?
 - Do you think you it's easier to be a Jain in India? Could you be a better Jain there?
- How do you think the understanding and practice of Jainism is changing in Leicester?
 - Do older and younger generations *understand* Jainism differently?
 - Do older and younger generations *practice* Jainism differently?
 - Why do you think Jainism is changing? What are the influences? Anything about English society/culture?
- Would you say Jainism is practiced differently today (in Leicester) as it was when you were young?
 - Are there specific beliefs/practices that you can see as changing?
- Do you think Jainism will be different in 10, 50, 100 years? How?
 - What do you think will be the reasons for such change?
 - Would different changes occur in England and in India?
- Do you think it's important that the Leicester Jain community works hard to fit into the English society?
 - What are the benefits of doing that?
 - Are there any Indian/Jain things that you cannot do, if you want to be accepted by the English society?
 - Do you think it's important other people in Leicester know about Jainism? Why (not)?
 - Do you often have to explain what Jainism is to other people? How do you explain it?
 - What are the kind of questions you usually get when you explain Jainism to someone?
- Do you think the Jain community in Leicester is small or is it typical of a city with 300,000 people?
 - How do you think the size of the Jain community in Leicester affects how it's organised, what kind of events they put on, how the different sects interact etc.?

- Do you think the size of the community also affects how individual people understand/practice Jainism? How? What would be different if the community was smaller/bigger?
- Do you have mostly Jain/Indian/English/other friends?
- Do you ever discuss religious things with other people? Jains / non-Jains? Which things?
- How do you feel about there being no monastic orders in the UK/Europe?
 - Why aren't there any monastic orders outside of India?
 - Do you think a monastic order could ever be started outside of India?
 - Would you want to have monks/nuns in the UK? Why (not)?

Implementation in everyday life

- Do you have any particular things/habits you do throughout the day to keep your mind focused on spirituality? (e.g., listen to stavans, do the mala, say navkar mantra, think of tirthankaras, etc., even if it's something small like saying 'namo arihantanam' when someone sneezes)
 - Are these small daily habits important to you? Why?
 - Do you know if other (older/younger) people also do things like that during their day?
- Do you have any other spiritual habits that you wouldn't necessarily characterise as Jain?
 - Are they important to you? When did you start practicing them? For what reason?
- Have you ever taken vows to follow Jainism more strictly in your life? (not eat certain foods/fast, not travel, read/learn) For how long? Why was it important to take the vow?
 - Do you know any people who've taken vows? What kind of vows? What do you think of them?
 - Did Jainism ever affect any bigger decisions in your life? (eat, travel, location, job,...)
- How important is food in your practice of Jainism?
 - What foods are prohibited by the Jain teachings? Why?
 - What foods don't you eat? Do you not eat them because you are a Jain or some other reason?
 - Does one acquire negative karma from cooking or consuming certain foods?
 - Does your whole family follow the same diet?
 - Do you think different generations (men/women) are more strict with following the food prescriptions? Why do you think that is?
 - Do you think what one eats reflects how religious they are? How/why?

- Do you think it is any more difficult / easier to follow Jain food restrictions in England than in India? Why?
- Do you think veganism is connected with Jainism? How?
- Have you ever fasted?
 - What was/is the main reason for your decision to fast? Why this particular fast?
 - How often do you fast? What kinds of fasts did you perform? Planning on fasting in the future?
 - Is fasting important to you?
 - Do many people in the Jain community fast as well? Why is fasting so important in Jainism?
 - Do you think different generations fast more or less? Men and women? Why?
 - Do you think fasting reflects one's religiosity? How/why?
- How do you learn more about Jainism? (Read books, read stories, listen to talks, go to lectures, speak to other Jains, speak to sadhu/sadhvi-jis, listen to Jain CDs/music,...)
 - What kind of books do you read? Where do you get them?
 - Do you rely on any particular person/persons to tell you how to be a better Jain?
 - Do you communicate with Jains in India as well? Anywhere else (e.g., East Africa, London, Belgium, USA,...)?
- Have you ever visited a sadhu/sadhvi-ji?
 - Is talking with sadhu/sadhvi-jis important to you? Why are they important for Jainism?
 - What are some of the things you talk about with sadhu/sadhvi-jis?
 - Do you communicate with sadhu/sadhvi-jis even from England? How often? Important to you?
 - Have you ever considered renouncing?
- Do you have a teacher/guru?
 - Why this teacher? What are some of the things they teach you? Do you visit / talk to them?
 - Do you think having a teacher/guru is important? Why?
 - Would you consider Jayeshbhai to be your teacher (as well)?
 - What is his role at the Jain temple? What does he teach you in his talks?

Religious organisation: who is who

- What are the differences between Digambara and Śvetāmbara Jains?
 - What things do they believe/do that are different from what you believe/practice?
 - Why did these differences come about?

- Is this difference important to you?
- What are the differences between Derawasi and Sthanakasi Jains?
 - What things to they believe/do that are different from what you believe/practice?
 - Why did these differences come about?
 - Is this difference important to you?
- Many people think Jainism is very close to Hinduism – would you agree?
 - Do you do any religious things that you consider are Hindu – e.g., go to Hindu temples etc.?
 - Do you go to any other religious events / do any other religious things that you wouldn't necessarily characterise as Jain? Like what?
 - I've heard a lot of people mention chakras – would you consider them Hindu, or are they Jain?
- Would you say Jainism is in conflict with western science or do they work together nicely?
 - What are some parts of Jainism that are aligned with western science? And not so aligned?
 - Is it important to you that Jainism is 'scientific' (that it is aligned with science)? Why (not)?
- What are the differences between Śrimalis and Oswals?
 - What are the relationship between Śrimalis and Oswals in Leicester?
 - Why do they celebrate Paryushan separately?
 - What is a jāti? Which jati are you? Is your jati identity important to you? In what ways? Does it influence your life?
 - How many jātis are there in England? How many of them are Jain jātis?
 - Do you think the differences between the jatis still matter in England? Why (not)?

India & East Africa & Diaspora

- How often do you go to India? What are the reasons you go?
 - Is it important to you to go to India? Why?
 - Do you perform any religious activities while you're in India?
 - Do Leicester Jains often go to India for religious purposes?
 - Have there been any Jains who have gone to India and took diksha? Tell me about them.
 - Do you go to India for any major life events (e.g., marry, important puja etc.)? Which ones?
 - Why is it important for you to go to India for these events?
 - Do many people go to India for such things? Why / why not more?
- Would you consider moving back to India at some point in your life? Did you always think that?

- Do people often/ever mention moving back to India? Did many people move back?
- Do you think people are still hoping for one day to move back?
- What do you think life in India would be like? Good or bad? In what ways?
- What would you say your relationship is with India? Do you think of it as some sort of spiritual/cultural/religious/ancestral/... home?
- Do you ever say ' (back) home' when you're talking about India?
- Where would you consider 'home' to be?
- Do you keep track of Indian / Gujarati politics?
 - Do you participate in elections / give money to political organisations / support any particular party? Why? How often?
 - Does the Jain community ever raise any money for political purposes back in India or Gujarat (e.g., support political organisations, campaigns, NGOs)?
 - Do you follow any other aspect of Indian/Gujarati public life? Sport? Movies? Music? Celebrities? Other news stories?
- Would you describe yourself as Indian? (Why?)
 - Would you describe yourself as English / Indian-English / Asian-English?
 - Do you feel like a part of the Indian diaspora? [Diaspora = a group of people with emotional, communicational, and other attachments to a place they trace their origins to.]
- Identity
 - Is being Indian important to you? In what ways? How does it influence your life?
 - Is being Gujarati important to you? In what ways? How does it influence your life?
 - Is being Jain important to you? In what ways? How does it influence your life?
 - What do you think the relationship between your Indian, Gujarati, and Jain identities is? Do they overlap, do you experience them as different parts of you, are you more one thing than another?
 - How important is being from East African to you? In what ways?
 - What do you think the relationship between your Indian and East African identity is? Do they overlap, do you experience them as different parts/sides of you?
- Do you keep in touch with Jains living in India? How?
 - Do you meet with them? How often? On what occasions?
 - Is it important for you to be in contact with them?
 - Do you feel your experience as a Jain living in England is similar to the experience of Jains living in India? Why? In what ways?

- How often do you go to East Africa? What are the reasons you go?
 - Is it important to you to go to East Africa? Why?
 - Do you perform any religious activities while you're in East Africa? Tell me about them.
 - Do you go to East Africa for any major life events (e.g., marry, big puja etc.)? Which ones?
 - Why is it important for you to go to East Africa for these events?
 - Do many people go to East Africa for such things?
 - Do you ever think about moving back to East Africa? Did you always think like that?
 - What do you think life in East Africa would be like? Good or bad? In what ways?
 - What would you say your relationship is with East Africa? Do you think of it as some sort of spiritual/cultural/religious/ancestral/... place/home?
- Do you keep in touch with Jains living in East Africa? How?
 - Do you meet with them? How often? On what occasions?
 - Is it important for you to be in contact with them? Why?
 - Do you feel your experience as a Jain living in England is similar to the experience of Jains living in East Africa? Why? In what ways?
- Are you in contact with any Jains living elsewhere (in diaspora – Europe, the USA, Belgium)? How?
 - Do you meet with them? How often? On what occasions?
 - Is it important to you to be in contact with them? Why (not)?
 - Do you feel like your experience as a Jain living in Leicester is similar to the experience of other Jains living in the UK/Europe/USA? Why? In what ways?

Theory: Informal social control, rationalisation, Banks's model

- Do you think other Jains understand Jainism in a similar way that you do?
 - How do they understand it?
 - Do you ever feel any pressure (from other Jains) to change your views of Jainism?
 - Do you think there are any particular different ways of how people understand Jainism (e.g., some prioritise the rituals, some are more into engaging with the wider world, taking care of the environment, maybe some are very invested in aligning Jainism with science,...)?
 - Do you think your use of the English language affects how you explain and understand Jainism? (e.g., Do you think using the English word 'god' affect how you think about the tirthankaras etc.?)

- Do you feel the English society has different expectations of you than the Jain community? (E.g., in terms of behaviour, beliefs, clothing, food, lifestyle, what you do in your life etc.)
 - What are the English and what the Jain expectations?
 - Which ones do you feel closer to what you'd want to follow?

Religion: Understanding of Jain doctrine

- Can you explain the workings of karma to me?
 - How does karma determine what will happen to you in your life?
 - What does karma effect you (the family your born in, the events in your life, illnesses etc.)?
 - Where does karma come from, what are its origins? In one's life? (thoughts, speech, , food,...?)
 - Is karma important to you?
- How would you explain the nature and the workings of rebirth to me?
 - Is rebirth (an) important (part of Jainism) for you?
 - How does the soul travel from one life to the next?
 - Do you ever think of your past/future rebirths? Do you think your rebirth was good or bad?
- What is a soul (jīva)?
 - What is it made of? What are its properties?
 - Where do souls come from?
 - How does a soul start its journey towards moksa? Can any soul attain liberation?
 - What does a soul need to do to reach moksa?
 - How important is the Jain concept of soul to you?
- What is mokṣa (liberation)?
 - How do you imagine mokṣa to be like?
 - What do you need to do to attain moksa? Can any soul attain moksa?
 - Is moksa possible now as well?
 - Is striving to reach moksa important to you?
- Can you explain what a tīrthaṅkara means to you? Are tirthankaras important to you?
 - Do you have a favourite tirthankara or a tirthankara you feel particularly close to? A story?
 - Can a tirthankara help you in your life? How? Help you get through tough times, pass an exam, recover from an illness, fast, help you become a better person etc.?
 - Do you perform any rituals involving a tirthankara? What kind?
 - What qualities are the most important in a tirthankara? Do you strive to emulate them?

- Terminology
 - When you say ‘god’ what exactly do you mean by that?
 - Do you use words like swami, bhagwan, -nath etc.? What do they mean?
 - What is the difference between a tirthankara, an arihant, a siddha, a jina?
- Tell me about Jain gods and goddesses (devas).
 - Are the devas important to you? Any specific one that you feel closest to? Favourite story?
 - Have they achieved moksa as well?
 - What can the devas help you with (get through tough times, pass an exam, recover from an illness, fast etc.)?
 - Do you perform any rituals involving devas?
 - Are devas the same as yaksas/yaksis? What is the difference? Are they important to you?
- Can you explain the Jain cosmos to me?
 - How many heavens/hells/earths are there?
 - How do you end up in one of the hells/heavens? What do you have to do?
 - What is Jambudvipa? Is this the only place where humans live? How do you feel about such places?
 - Is the Jain cosmos important to you? Does it clash with the Western scientific idea?
- Can you explain the kal chakra (the time cycles) to me?
 - How many cycles are there? Which one are we in? What are its properties?
 - How did the cycles start?
 - Are the time cycles important to you? Clash with the Western scientific idea?
- Where did you learn all these things? From books, your parents, the pathshala, Jain sadhu and sadhvi-jis, etc.?
 - Do you do anything to keep learning (e.g., read books, visit gurus, go to lectures etc.)?

Rituals

- Do you have any particular things/habits you do throughout the day to keep your mind focused on spirituality?
 - Are these small daily habits important to you? Why?
 - Do you know if other (older/younger) people also do things like that during their day?

- Do you have any other spiritual habits that you wouldn't necessarily characterise as Jain?
 - Are they important to you? When did you start practicing them? For what reason?
- Do you say the navkar mantra?
 - Do you say it often? How often? Do you say it at particular times or in particular places?
 - When did you learn it? Who taught it to you?
 - Do you think the navkar mantra is important? Why? What does it mean to you?
 - Do you think the navkar mantra has particular powers? What kind?
- Do you know/say any other mantras?
 - Which ones? What do they mean? Are they important to you? Why?
 - Do you say specific mantras at specific times/places/events?
 - Do you say any mantras while you're doing something (e.g. cooking, driving, sleep,...)?
- Do you have a shrine or something similar at home?
 - If not; Do you have murtis at home? Any other imagery, pictures, books,...?
 - What does your shrine look like? What kinds of things do you have in it?
 - Do you perform any rituals at your shrine?
 - By yourself / with other family members / with someone else? How often?
- Do you perform any other rituals at home (that are not centered on the shrine)? (e.g., doing a samayik somewhere else, doing the maḷa, meditating, singing stavans,...)
 - Do you perform any rituals strictly at home (and not at the temple)?
 - Why is performing these rituals important to you?
 - Do you know if other people perform the same rituals in their homes as well? Do they perform different rituals?
- How often do you go to the temple?
 - Only go for bigger events/functions or on your own as well?
 - What is the main reason you go to the temple? (Is it to see other Jains, help out with things, have a break from the daily life, feel a connection with the tīrthaṅkaras, perform rituals,...?)
 - Do you think there are differences in how often and why people go to the temple depending on how old they are? Why do you think that is?
- Is the temple important to you?
 - What does the temple represent/mean to you?
 - How active would you consider yourself to be in the Jain community?
 - Is being involved in the community important to you?

- Do you perform any rituals at the temple?
 - Do you perform these rituals alone / with people?
 - Do you perform them on a regular basis (e.g., every day/week/couple of days,...)?
 - If not; what is the reason you decide to go and do something at the temple?
 - Why is it important to perform these rituals?
- What religious rituals do you perform on a regular basis?
 - Why are they important to you? (By yourself / with other people / with family?)
 - What rituals do you perform daily/weekly/annually/on special occasions?
 - Who else in the Jain community performs these rituals as well? (Men/women, younger/older?)
 - Do you think different generations practice different rituals? Do they practice the same rituals differently? Why do you think that is?

Specific rituals

- Do you perform aarti? How often?
 - Do you do aarti on any murti or do they need to be special murtis?
 - Do you perform it at the temple or at home as well? Any difference?
 - Who taught you how to do the aarti and what songs to sing?
 - Is it important to you to do aarti? Why? How often do you do it?
 - Is it important to you to hold the light / ring the bell / sing / clap during aarti?
 - Do you think different generations do aarti differently? How? Why do you think that is?
 - What do you think about the practice of bidding for performing the aarti? Important?
- Do you perform mangal divo? How often?
 - How is divo different from the aarti? Why does it have to be performed after an aarti?
 - Do you perform it at the temple or at home as well? Any difference?
 - Is it important for you to do divo? Why? How often do you do it?
 - Do you think different generations do divo differently? How? Why do you think that is?
- Do you perform pūjā? How often?
 - Can you describe what you do during a puja?
 - Why do you touch the murti in the places you touch it? What does it mean?
 - Why do you use the saffron paste? Does it have a special meaning?

- Do you say anything while doing puja? Think of anything special?
- Why do you need to wear special clothes?
- Why is it not allowed to eat/drink/go to toilet in those clothes?
- Do you have a particular clothes set aside just for coming to the temple?
- Do you use new clothes first as temple clothes and then as normal clothes?
- Where can you buy things like a muhpati, Jain murtis for your home, etc.?
- Who taught you how to do puja?
- Is it important to you to do puja? Why? How often do you do it?
- Do you think different generations do the puja differently? How? Why do you think that is?
- Do you perform snatra puja? How often?
 - Can you describe what you do during it?
 - What are the substances used? What do they mean?
 - Are there any things said during it? What do they mean? Do you think of anything special?
 - Where did you learn how to do it?
 - Is it important for you to do it? Why?
 - Do you think different generations do this puja differently? How? Why do you think that is?
- Are there any other kinds of pujas that you know/do?
 - What are the differences between them? What do you do during each one?
 - When is a specific puja performed? Why then & why that one?
 - Which ones do you perform? How often? Is performing them important to you?
 - Do you think different generations do them differently?
- Do you perform darshan? How often?
 - Can you describe what you do during a darshan?
 - Do you say anything while doing darshan (e.g., mantra)? Think of anything special?
 - Who taught you how to do darshan?
 - Is it important to you to do darshan? Why? How often do you do it?
 - Do you think different generations do darshan differently? How? Why do you think that is?
- Do you do samayik? How often?
 - Can you describe what you normally do during a samayik? Why is the timing so important?
 - Do you perform it at the temple or at home as well?
 - Do you know how to say the verses during a samayik? Who taught them to you?

- Is it important to you to do samayik? Why? How often do you do it?
- Do you think different generations do samayik differently? How? Why do you think that is?
- Do you do the pratikraman? How often?
 - Can you describe what you do during a pratikraman?
 - Is pratikraman done only during Paryushan or at other times as well?
 - Do you know how to say the verses during the pratikraman? Who taught them to you?
 - Do you perform it at the temple or at home as well?
 - Do you think of anything special while you do the pratikraman?
 - Is it important to you to do pratikraman? Why? How often do you do it?
 - Do you think different generations do pratikraman differently? How? Why do you think that is?
 - What verses/shlokas can be recited in the pratikraman? Is bidding important to you?
- What is bhakti? Do you ever perform it? How often?
 - What do you do during a bhakti? Where / when do you do it?
 - Who taught you how to do bhakti?
 - Is doing bhakti important to you? Why?
 - Do you think different generations do bhakti differently? In what ways? Why?
- Do you ever sing stavans? How often?
 - What kind of stavans do you sing? When do you do it?
 - Where did you learn the stavans?
 - Is it important to you to sing stavans?
 - Is there a singing group in Leicester that sings stavans?
- Are there any rituals that are important to Jainism that I forgot to mention?
- Is there anything else in your life that is important to how you lead your life as a Jain?

Additional Questions for Jamnagar Jains

- What does Paryushan look like in Jamnagar?
 - Where do you celebrate it? In the derasar or in the upashray?
 - Do you go to your local derasar or the big derasars in Chandi Bajar?
 - Do all the Jains in Jamnagar celebrate it together? Or every community separately?
- Is there an organization that connects all the Jains in Jamnagar?
 - Do you have any opportunities to meet other Jains, who don't live close by? Would you want to?
 - Do you mainly spend time with other Jains during your time off? Do you have many Hindu or Muslim friends?

- Are there any events put on by the Jain community to spread the Jain teachings in Jamnagar? (e.g., inter-faith lectures, closing of slaughter houses)
- Do you often have to explain what Jainism is to other people? What do you say?
- Do the Jains ever participate in public debates in politics? (In Jamnagar or in India?)
- Do the Jamnagar Jains ever raise money for special causes (e.g., natural disaster, animal welfare etc.)?
- How is the pathshala organized?
 - Is the pathshala only for children? How can adults learn more?
 - Do the children also go to see sadhu/sadhvi-jis?
 - In pathshala do they only teach mantras or other things as well – stories, how to do puja etc.?
 - How do the children learn how to do puja? Is it at a specific age?
 - Does every derasar have a pathshala?
- Variations of Leicester-specific questions

Question Guide: Administrative Roles

(Conducted with respondents who either held leadership positions in the Leicester Jain Centre at the time of my fieldwork or have done so in the past.)

- Can you tell me how the temple was started? What was your role?
 - Did you encounter any difficulties with establishing the temple / community / organization?
 - I've read/heard there was a split with the Oswal Jains. How did that happen?
 - What are the temple's relations with the Oswal community now?
 - Do you think this division is important to people?
- How much do you think the temple changed since it was founded?
 - How did the temple look before the murtis were installed?
 - Have you worked on the insides much after it was opened?
 - Are you planning any major changes for the future?
- How do you think the understanding/practice of Jainism is changing in Leicester?
 - Do younger/older people practice Jainism differently?
 - What are the reasons behind the changes?
 - What will the Leicester Jain community look like in 10, 50, 100 years? Any changes?
- Do you think Jainism is practiced differently in Leicester than in India? In what ways? Reasons?

- Do you think being a Jain is more difficult in England than in India or is it the same?
- What are some of the challenges Jains face by living in the UK? Would they face them in India as well?
- What is the role of Jayeshbhai and Ashokbhai in the temple? What are their titles?
 - How did you find/recruit people for these positions?
 - Do you think it's important to have them? Is it important that they're from India? Why?
 - Who were the people here before them?
 - Do you think Jayeshbhai has had a major influence on Jains in Leicester?
 - Do they come here more often / engage in religious activities / understand Jainism better?
- What is the relationship between Sthanakvasi and Derawasi sects? Digambar? Srimad Rajchandra?
 - How does the temple insure everyone is happy?
- Have you seen any change in how people practice their way of Jainism because they practice it together?
- What sort of activities does the temple organize? Which ones are most popular?
- How do you engage younger people?
- Does the temple have any outreach activities for the wider, non-Jain public?
- Is the temple active in the political structure of the city – e.g., Leicester Council of Faiths etc.?
- What do you think non-Jain people in Leicester think about Jainism? Do they know much?
- Have you (or anyone else) ever experienced any difficulties for being a Jain?
- Is the temple in touch with any other temples in the UK / Europe / USA / India?
- What is the relationship with the Tapovan organisation in India?
- Does the temple ever send any resources (money, clothes etc.) to India or anywhere else? For what reasons? [help with national disasters, support any causes, sponsor any events etc.]
- What are your plans for the future?
 - Are you planning to do some more work on the temple?
 - Are you planning some new initiatives, events, development?

Question Guide: Jayeshbhai

- What is your role in the Leicester Jain temple?

- Do you have a specific title?
- What kind of things do you do?
- When did you come to Leicester?
- How come you decided to apply for this job?
- Did you do a similar job in India as well? Is there a similar position in Indian derasars?
- What does Ashokbhai do?
 - Does he do similar things like you? What kind of things does he do?
 - Are there similar jobs in Indian derasars? Did he do it before he came to Leicester?
- Do you think Jainism is practiced differently in Leicester than in India? In what ways?
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Do you think being a Jain is more difficult in England than in India or is it the same?
 - What are some of the challenges Jains face by living in the UK? Would they face them in India as well?
- What is your impression of how people understand and practice Jainism in Leicester?
- When you first came to Leicester, did you see any changes between Jainism in India and here?
 - Do they understand / practice it in the same way Jains do in India? What kinds of things are different and what same?
 - How do you think not having sadhu and sadhvijis in Leicester people's Jainism?
- How do you think the understanding and practice of Jainism is changing in Leicester?
 - Do the younger generations understand Jainism any differently than the older generations?
 - Have you noticed any changes since you arrived in Leicester?
 - Do people understand the teachings and the rituals in the same way or do they have many interpretations?
 - Do you think Jainism in general (not just in Leicester) is changing? Was it understood/practiced the same way when you were young as it is today?
- What would you say is the most important Jain ritual?
 - Why is it so important?
 - Do you think other people in Leicester also think that way? If no, what do they think?
- Do you think Jainism will be different in 10, 50, 100 years? How?
 - Would different changes occur in England and in India?
 - What do you think would be the reasons for such changes?

- How many Jains are there in Leicester?
 - Do you know approx. how many Jain in Leicester are Gujarati?
 - How many people have come directly from India? How many came from East Africa? Anywhere else? – Are they all Indian?
 - How many are Derawasi? Sthanakvasi? Digambara? Srimad Rajchandra followers? Terapanthi? Dada bhagwan? Other types of Jains? Non-practicing Jains?
 - How many Hindus or converted Hindus are in Jain families in Leicester (e.g., Shashiben or Prafullaben's husband)?
- What is the relationship between Sthanakvasi and Derawasi sects? Digambar? Srimad Rajchandra?
 - How does the temple insure everyone is happy?
 - Have you seen any change in how people practice their way of Jainism because they practice it together?
- Would you say Jainism works well together with science or are they in conflict sometimes?
 - What are some parts of Jainism that align with science and which don't?
 - Do you think it's important Jainism is seen as scientific?
 - Do many people in the community see Jainism as scientific?
- Do you think it's important for Jains to integrate in the wider English society?
 - Why? What are the benefits of doing that?
 - Are there any Jain/Indian practices that you feel cannot be practices, if one wants to be accepted by the wider English society?
 - Do you feel the English society has different expectations from people that the Jain community (in terms of dressing, eating, behaviour, lifestyle, beliefs,...)?
 - Has anyone ever experienced any difficulties for being a Jain?
- What kind of public outreach events to non-Jains does the Jain Samaj organise? (e.g., public lectures, student visits, open door days, media participation etc.)
 - Do you think it's important that other people in Leicester know about Jainism? Why?
 - Is the temple active in the political structure of the city – e.g., Leicester Council of Faiths etc.?
 - Are representatives of Jainism ever invited to debates about policy issues (e.g., same-sex marriage, abortion, poverty, etc.)?
 - Do representatives of the Jain community participate in creating any laws on religion in Leicester / the UK / Europe / India?
- Is the temple in touch with any other temples or institutions in the UK / Europe / USA?
- Is the temple in contact with any organisations in India?

- What kind of organisations? What is the nature of those contacts – religious, economic, social?
 - Does it ever send any money abroad? For what reasons?
 - Does the temple ever send any resources (money, clothes etc.) to India or anywhere else? For what reasons? [help with national disasters, support any causes, sponsor any events etc.]
- What is the temple's relationship with Leicester Hindu organisations?
 - Do you work together to organize events (e.g., Diwali lights)?
 - Do you ever get put together as one religion by English people?
- Do you have to work on people/institutions recognizing the difference between Jainism and Hinduism?
- Do you think the Jain community in Leicester is small for such a city?
 - Do you think the size of the community affects how it is organized?
 - Does it affect how people practice Jainism?
- What do you think is the significance of having a temple in Leicester?
 - Would you say many people come to the temple every day?
- Do people come here for spiritual things (like doing rituals), social things (like meeting with friends and family), or educational things (learn more about Jainism etc.)?
- What sort of activities does the temple organize?
 - What is the response of the people to those activities? Which ones are their most and least favourite?
 - What is the importance of organizing yatra trips (pilgrimages)? In the UK and to India?
- What are your plans for the future?
 - Are you planning some special religious events, lectures, classes, projects?
 - Do you have any plans on how to keep the children interested in Jainism and make sure they keep coming back to the derasar?
- Do you know if there have been any converts to Jainism in the UK? In the US, Belgium?
- Does the Jain Centre ever participate in public debates surrounding religious issues?
 - Does it participate in creating any legislative on religion?
 - Does it participate in any public debates on controversial topics like same-sex marriage, abortion etc.? Are there any private debates surrounding these issues?
 - Does the Jain Centre do any public outreach or interfaith events?
 - How does the Jain community participate on the Council of Faiths?

Question Guide: Mini Interviews

(Conducted towards the end of my fieldwork in Leicester, once I have already identified some major themes.)

- Where did you grow up and how did you come to Leicester?
- What branch of Jainism do you identify with? Is that important to you? Why?
- Jainism
 - What does it mean to be Jain to you?
 - What is the most important aspect of Jainism for you?
 - What is the most important Jain ritual for you?
 - Which ritual do you practice most often?
- Practice
 - What daily/regular activities do you perform that you would characterise as 'Jain'?
 - Do you think food is important for your practice of Jainism? Why?
- What are some difficulties with being a Jain in England?
- Change
 - What do you think some of the differences are between how Jainism is practiced in India and in Leicester / England?
 - What do you think are some differences in practice and understanding between older and younger Leicester Jains?
 - What do you think the practice of Jainism will look like in Leicester in fifty years' time?

Question Guide: Youth Focus Group

(Conducted with nine youngsters in the Leicester Jain Centre on 3rd September 2016.)

- What is your favourite and your least favourite thing about Jainism?
- Jainism
 - Do your friends (at school etc.) know you are Jain? What do you tell them about Jainism?
 - What are some things connected to Jainism that you do on a regular basis? (almost every day/week/month)
 - What are some examples of how Jainism influences your life? (In your daily activities, how you act in particular situations, how you think about life, how you structure your day etc.)
 - What is it like being a young Jain in Leicester/England?
 - What does Jainism (and being a Jain) mean to you?
- Temple
 - How often do you come to the temple? For what reason?

- What does the temple mean to you?
- What is your favourite thing about the temple? ...least favourite thing?
- How do you think the temple could be improved, so that it would be more attractive to you?
 - What kind of things would you want to do at the temple? Just religious or other kinds as well?
 - What kind of events would you want to see organised? More social events? More events aimed at explaining Jainism?
 - What are some things (events, activities,...) you would want to do more at the temple? Which ones would you want to do less?
 - Would you prefer having a younger person lead the organisation of such events or would the events organized by the executive committee still be attractive to you?
 - How do you feel about the use of Gujarati/English in temple's events?
 - Do you see the use of Gujarati in temple activities as a barrier preventing you from fully participating?
 - In what ways could English be included into religious/social activities?
 - How do you feel about rituals being performed in Gujarati/English?
- If you could tell the older people running the temple something about X, what would it be?
 - ...about the experience of young Jains in Leicester?
 - ...about your experience of the temple?
 - ...about things to improve so that the temple would be more attractive to young Jains like you?

Question Guide: Focus Group with Adults

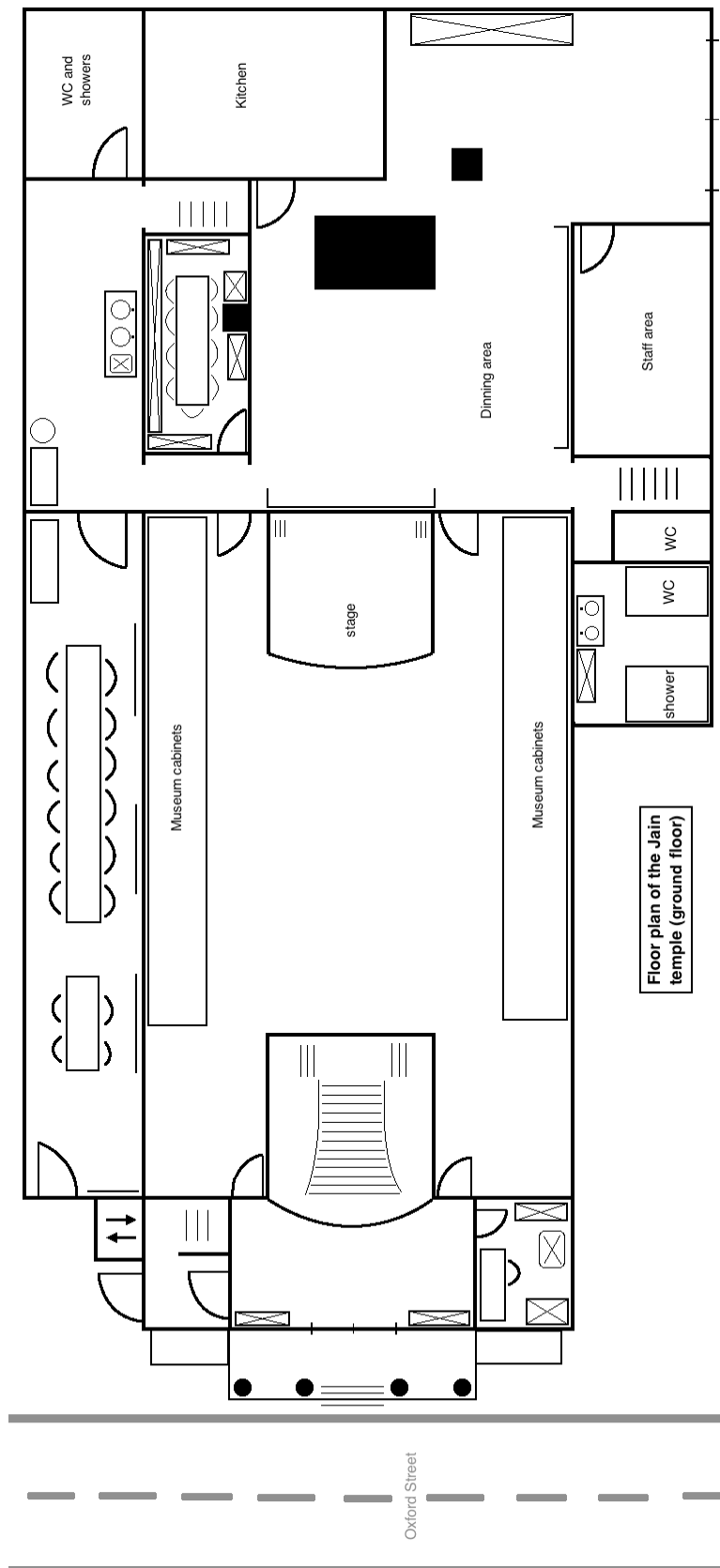
(Conducted with six people in the Leicester Jain Centre on 21st August 2016.)

- Where did you grow up and how did you come to Leicester?
- What are some of the differences you have observed between how Jainism is practiced when you were young and how it's practiced now in Leicester?
- What are some of the difficulties with being a Jain in England?
 - Are there particular ways the English society influences your thinking and practice of Jainism?
- What are some differences in how old and young people practice Jainism?
 - Differences in understanding / practice / attendance?
 - Why do you think young people are less interested and less engaged with Jainism?
 - How could young people be encouraged to participate more?

- What is the relationship between the different branches of Jainism in the Leicester Jain community?
- What do you think Jainism and the Leicester Jain community will look like in fifty years? (Rituals? Understanding? Attendance?)
- What would be the most important thing for me to have learnt from this discussion?

Appendix 2

Leicester Jain Centre



Ground floor: Foyer, assembly hall, library, and service area

Stepping through the brown glass main doors of the building one enters the main foyer, a wide and long space most often used for gifting attendees with small symbolic gifts, welcoming guests and visiting groups to the Centre, and – more mundanely, yet most frequently – taking off one’s shoes before climbing the stairs into the worship areas.

Through two doors on each side of the foyer, one can enter the main assembly hall of the Jain Centre, where meticulously arranged museum cabinets line the walls depicting famous Jain stories and historical events. At the bottom of the hall is a stage used for various cultural performances put on by the Jain Centre’s administrative subgroups. Behind the stage lies what would most easily be described as the ‘service area.’ Walking through the door left of the stage one is confronted with the entrance to the Centre’s library, a small room packed with books in Gujarati, Hindi, and English, which mostly remain unread. The space, however, is regularly used by the Centre’s *pathshala*, children’s religious and linguistic (Gujarati) education taking place every Sunday during term-time.

The door to the right of the stage offers an easy access to the Centre’s back room, which is used as a serving and dinning area during mid-sized and bigger events held by the Jain Centre or during fasting times such as *ayambil*. The kitchen at the back is the abode of Ashok, the temples’ *pujari*, and numerous ladies who volunteer their time and skills to help with the preparation of Jain dishes. Tucked to the right side of the dining space is a narrow staircase leading upwards toward the Derawasi inner temple and the Sthanakvasi *upashray* on the floor above.

First floor: Digambar, Derawasi, and Sthanakvasi spaces

The main access to the Jain Centre’s first floor is via the building’s entrance foyer, where the cold white marble of the entry area turns into the deep softness of a burgundy red carpet slithering up the majestic staircase lined with red-and-gold paintings of Jain motifs and splitting half-way up to form two narrower staircases, which then veer into opposite directions, meeting again on the landing directly above the entrance.

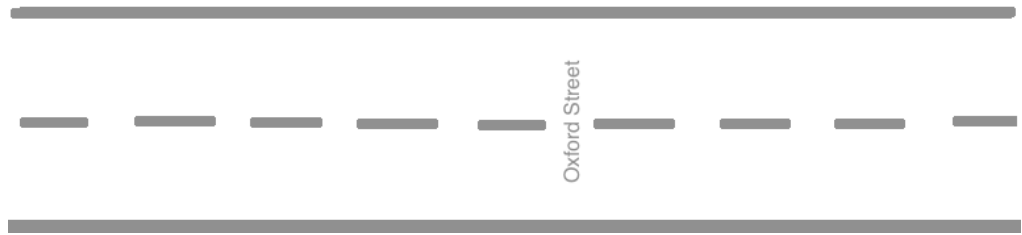
Turning left on the landing, a palm-wide wooden border marks the transition from the profane space of the landing to the sacred space of the Digambar temple. Taking no more than around ten square metres, the Digambar temple is divided into two sections: the back communal space and the more sacred front section, with two square columns and a silver donation chest separating the two areas. Presiding over the back half of the Digambar temple is a tall *murti* of Bahubali-swami (son of the first *tirthankar*), which is positioned to the side of an open space where worshipers gather for communal rituals, while the front half consists of a rectangular *jinalay* housing *murtis* of Adi-nath, Nemi-nath, and Mahavir-swami. Turning right on the landing, one encounters the *gnan mandir*, or temple of knowledge, which spatially corresponds to the front half of the Digambar temple. In this small room four *murtis* of important Jain figures (Nakoda Bhairavji, Manibhadra, Vijay Vallabh Surishwaraji, and Guru Gautam-swami) sit on a white marble ledge lining the two sides of the room.

Going through the main double-leaf doorway from the landing one enters into a spacious Derawasi temple. The transition is marked not only by the physical barrier of a doorway, but also by the changing sensation under one's feet (shifting from the rich red carpet of the landing to the woolly texture of a beige carpet covering the floors in all worship areas of the Centre) and the affective impact of the open space with high ceilings, tall stained-glass windows, and an unobstructed view of the *murtis* positioned at the other end of this (approximately) twelve by ten metre hall.

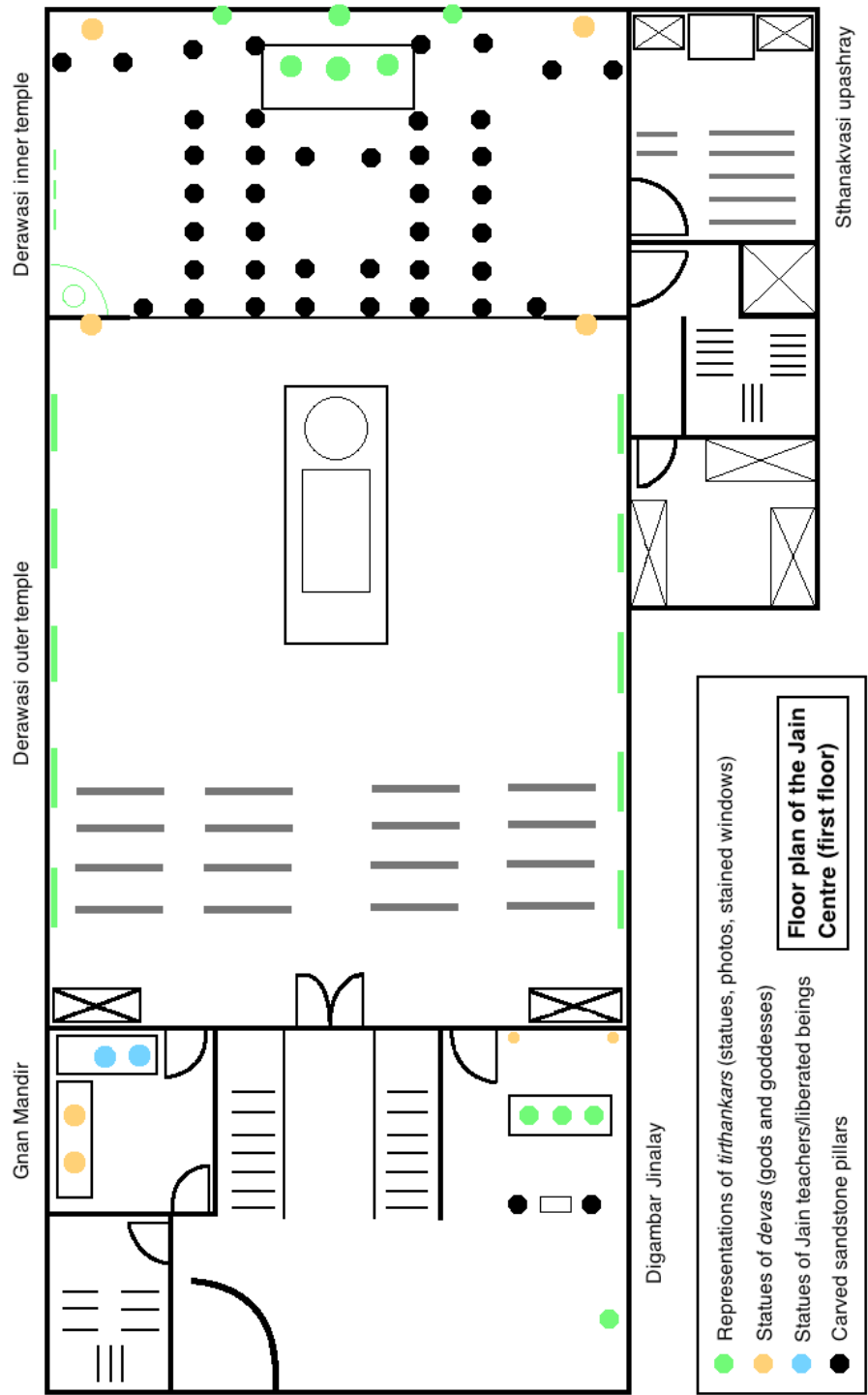
The main hall of the Leicester Jain Centre is divided into two parts: the 'outer temple,' which constitutes roughly two thirds of the entire space, and an 'inner temple,' which is separated from the outer temple by a marble step and a markedly different aesthetic. While the outer temple is rather conventional in its choice of colours and materials, and could perhaps even be called bland in its style, the inner temple is its opposite with the entirety of the interior being meticulously crafted in order to evoke the atmosphere of traditional Jain temples. Filled with a forest of intricately carved sandstone pillars depicting various Jain motifs and topped with an equally elaborate dome designed and carved by classical Indian artisans, the inner temple echoes the sombre character of Indian Jain temples.

The dark brown colour of the inner temple's glazed sandstone interior is in stark contrast with the brightly lit *garbha-griha* (the 'inner sanctum'), which houses the three main *murtis* of the Derawasi temple – Shanti-nath-bhagwan, Mahavir-swami, and Parshwa-nath-bhagwan. Carved into single blocks of white marble stone and encircled by highly-decorated white marble mounting, the *murtis* noticeably stand out from the surrounding darkness of the inner temple, constructing an instinctive nucleus of the space and drawing the attention towards the objects of worship. The *garbha* and its contents are thus undoubtedly the central point of the 'inner temple' and the religious heart of the Leicester Jain Centre overall.

Going through a glass door in the right wall of the Derawasi inner temple, one enters into a relatively small room containing two decorative bookcases, a thick book put on top of a low ornamental chest in a position of reverence, and a handful of red upholstered chairs. This is the Sthanakvasi *upashray*, which is used predominantly for classes in adult religious education, as a place of silent contemplation, or a space most adequate for those, who have taken temporary ascetic vows – either in the form of *samayik* or *poushad* (the adoption of ascetic lifestyle for a set amount of days, typically performed around Paryushan). While most Leicester Jains use the doors leading to the inner Derawasi temple to enter the Stanakvasi *upashray*, there is also an adjacent door, which leads onto a small staircase and to the ground floor.



Oxford Street



Second floor: The Shrimad Rajchandra room

Next to the *gnan mandir* at the front-most side of the first floor lies a narrow staircase connecting all three levels of the Jain Centre. The slender staircase is the only access point to the building's second floor, a medium-seized space corresponding to the size and shape of the landing beneath it. The second floor of the Leicester Jain Centre has been dedicated to Shrimad Rajchandra, an influential lay thinker of the late 18th century famous beyond Jain circles due to his influence on Mahatma Gandhi. The space encompasses an almost life-sized statue of Rajchandra sitting cross-legged (above the Digambar temple on the floor beneath) and a tall reproduction of Rajchandra's most famous photograph at the base of the T-shaped room (above the main entryway into the Derawasi temple hall). In front of the photograph is a low table laden with books and two bookcases line the walls on either side. While there is a bench and a few chairs at the back of the room, they are rarely used, as few people visit the Shrimad Rajchandra room on their own and for those that do, a simple gesture of obeisance to the photographic image of Rajchandra usually suffices.

